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feature

INTERNET: Basics and Beyond

Want to get online fast? Wondering what to do once you're there?
We offer a netpourri of information on ways to painlessly get onto the net. Then, we lead you through places to visit and things to do to help you take advantage of this worldwide communications network. Check out our overview on page 20.

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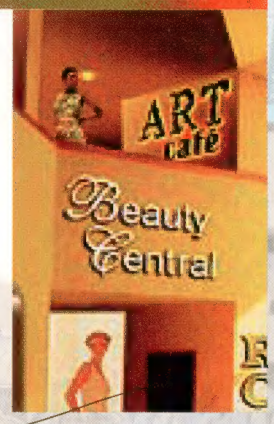

a word from the editor

Welcome to *The Net* in March

As you look through the magazine in your hands, you'll find a number of significant changes, all of them reflecting the two major goals of this magazine: to track the still-emerging communications medium known as the Internet, and to direct readers to places online that will be meaningful to them.

One change we've made is to create a more comprehensive guide to places on the net. Basically, we've combined our Web site review section and our Internet directory, The Blue Pages. Our new, 32-page Internet directory starts on page 65. We've broken down sites into 24 different categories, which will remain constant month to month. Our intrepid Sitings reviewers rate sites according to content, aesthetic appeal, and "tecno smartness." Those of you who get our *netPOWER* CD-ROM each month will find it has hotlinks to these sites for your optimal net surfing.

Another change you'll see is in our feature section. We're committed to covering topics in much greater depth, and to help us do so, we've asked Crystal Waters, our dedicated Reviews Editor, to step into the new position of Features Editor. This month, we're going back to basics, and then taking you beyond to the exciting possibilities available online (pages 20-60).

Don't worry, though, other things about the magazine aren't changing. We're still featuring a bizarre site each month, as well as our special humor column. News, now called Net Trends, is still at the front of the magazine (pages 12-14), as are reviews of worthwhile Internet books (page 15).

As the new Editor in Chief of *The Net*, I welcome you to explore the issue, and write me with your comments, ideas, and suggestions. Also, we love when you send us URLs for sites you want us to review (send them to **sitings@thenet-usa.com**). Please keep those sites coming. And, enjoy the spring!

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netPOWER

Instructions for the CD-ROM

The March edition of *netPOWER* will expand and enhance your experience of *The Net*. It provides you with hundreds of the resources you'll read about in the pages of the magazine. So, when an article describes Web sites you want to check out, go straight to the *netPOWER* disc to access all of those URLs; they're conveniently hyperlinked for quick 'n' easy Web surfing. Also, as usual, *netPOWER* has our March Sites of the Month; we've mirrored* seven of these special Web sites. We also offer a collection of the latest in Web authoring tools (see our Starter Kit), and lots of great shareware.**

Mirror Museums

*By mirroring, we mean that we've stored locally on this CD-ROM the Web pages you would see if you were cruising the Internet and accessing the particular site. This way, you'll be able to easily access these sites at lightening-fast speed.

**Licensing information is included with each program. When you use a shareware program, you accept the responsibility to adhere to that license and restrictions. *netPOWER* claims no interest in the copyrighted programs of the individual authors. You are NOT purchasing usage rights to this software with *netPOWER*. To obtain usage rights, you must register with the developer identified in each program. After you check it out, we strongly urge you to register your software with the respective author.

To get to the Resources, Hyperlinks, Sites of the Month, and Starter Kit on *netPOWER*:

Windows

1. Put the *netPOWER* disc into your CD-ROM drive.
2. Open your Web browser.
3. Choose `Open local` or `Open file` from the File menu. (Note: If you're a Pipeline NY customer, you'll need to use a different browser.)
4. Choose `D:\START.HTM` (assuming D: is your CD drive). Be sure that the open dialog says `show.htm files` if you're using a browser from an online service.
5. If you can't locate the `START.HTM` file, make sure that under `files of type`, you've selected all files `(*.*)`.

Macintosh

1. Put the *netPOWER* disc into your CD-ROM drive.
2. Open your Web browser.
3. Choose `Open local` or `Open file` from the file menu.
4. Click on the desktop button, open `netPOWER`, and then open `START.HTM`.
5. Alternatively, you can drag the `START.HTM` file on top of your browser's icon to open it.

To access all other files on *netPOWER*:

Windows 95

1. Insert the *netPOWER* disc into your CD-ROM drive.
2. Under the `Start` button, select `Run`.
3. In the `Run` window, select `Browse`, and look in `D` (assuming that `D` is the letter of your CD-ROM drive). Under `Files of type` select `All files (*.*)` to view the various folders containing shareware, advertising, and tax forms.

Windows 3.x

1. Insert the *netPOWER* disc into your CD-ROM drive.
2. Go to the Program Manager window, choose `Run`, and select `Browse` from your `D` drive (assuming D is the letter representing your CD-ROM drive).
3. Under `Files of type`, select `All files (*.*)` to view the various folders containing shareware, advertising, and tax forms.

Macintosh

1. Insert *netPOWER* into your CD-ROM drive.
2. Look on your desktop for the netPOWER window that contains the folders for shareware, advertising, and tax forms. ■

ADVERTISING

AOL

Windows 3.x

1. Go to the Program Manager window, choose `Run` from the file menu and type `D:\AOL\SETUP.EXE` (assuming D is the letter representing your CD-ROM drive).
2. Click on `OK` to continue then follow the onscreen instructions. When the installation is complete, double-click on the America Online icon.
3. When prompted, enter the registration number and password found on the insert that came inside the CD-ROM sleeve to begin your free trial.

Macintosh

1. Locate the America Online icon in the America Online folder on your desktop. Double-click on the AOL icon.
2. Follow the on-screen instructions and, when prompted, enter the registration number and password found on the insert that came inside the CD-ROM sleeve to begin your FREE trial.

CompuServe

Windows 95 and Windows 3.x

1. To check out the CompuServe demo, go to the `Run` window and type `D:\CSERVE\Csdemo.exe` (assuming `D` is the letter representing your CD-ROM drive).
2. To sign up with CompuServe, go to the `Run` window and type `D:\CSERVE\CSERVE\Setup.exe` (assuming D is the letter representing your CD-ROM drive).
3. Then follow the simple, step-by-step instructions on your screen.

Macintosh

1. Open the CompuServe folder within the *netPOWER* window on your desktop.
2. To run the CompuServe demo, double-click on the `GO` icon.
3. To sign up with CompuServe, double-click on the installer and follow the simple, step-by-step instructions on your screen.

Have Questions?
If you need help signing up with CompuServe, call the company toll-free at 800 336 6823. Outside the United States and Canada, call 614 529 1340.

EarthLink

Windows 95 and Windows 3.x

1. For Win 3.X, go to the `Run` window and type `D:\EARTHLINK\WIN3.1\Setup.exe` (assuming `D` is the letter representing your CD-ROM drive).
2. For Win 95, go to the `Run` window and type `D:\EARTHLINK\WIN95\Setup.exe` (assuming `D` is the letter representing your CD-ROM drive).
3. Follow the instructions to register your new EarthLink Network TotalAccess account.
4. If at any time you need help, click the `HELP` button or press `F1`.

Macintosh

1. Open the EarthLink folder within the *netPOWER* window on your desktop.
2. To sign up with EarthLink, double-click on the installer icon and follow the instructions to register your new EarthLink Network TotalAccess account.

Prodigy

Windows 95 and Windows 3.x:

1. To check out the Prodigy demo, go to the `Run` window and type `D:\PRODIGY\Runme.exe` (assuming `D` is the letter representing your CD-ROM drive).
2. To sign up with Prodigy, go to the `Run` window and type `D:\PRODIGY\INSTALL\Install.exe` (assuming `D` is the letter representing your CD-ROM drive).
3. Then, follow the simple, step-by-step instructions on your screen.

letters

Comments, Kudos, and Complaints to the Editors

E-Mail: talktous@thenet-usa.com **Mail:** 1350 Old Bayshore Hwy. #210, Burlingame, CA 94010

Kudos on the Disc

The *netPOWER* CD-ROM is worth every cent that I paid for the mag.

Kwek Chin Lin
chinlin@pacific.net.sg

Just got the latest issue of *The Net* with the CD-ROM. I'm still new to this and wanted to say thanks for making it so easy. Looking forward to the future!!

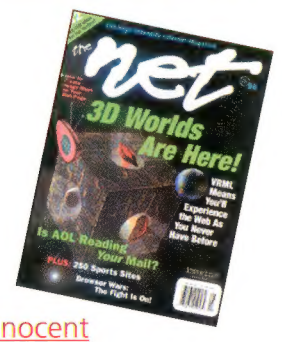
Bryan Sullivan
bsulliva@tcf.com

No Free Rides

On pages 74 and 75 of the December 95 issue, it states that "Smartmarks" is available free for downloading from Netscape's home page. I tried to download this feature free of charge only to find out that there was indeed a charge for the "Smartmarks." Was this an error on your part, or did I miss something?

Ed Ladendorf
eladendo@pla-net.net

Netscape is distributing Smartmarks the same way it's distributing its browser. You can download an evaluation copy for free, try it out for the amount of time given in the license agreement, and if you want to keep using it, you should pay the license fee. This is very similar to the way shareware is distributed.



Not So Innocent

I am writing to express my concerns about David Sobel's column in the January 96 article in *The Net*. I have been online for about six years now, and have never really been worried about someone reading my personal e-mail. But now, because of this article, I am really concerned about, not just someone, but my own server sifting through my mail. And if they read my e-mail, what else are they snooping into?

Is there anything that we, the public, can do to protect ourselves from being probed? Also, how can the FBI hold us accountable for unsolicited mail?

One final concern: AOL, Prodigy, and CompuServe, among others, all say that anyone who misrepresents themselves online will be terminated. So, what gives the government the right to misrepresent themselves?

Christian A Harvey
syjp92b@prodigy.com

***David Sobel responds:* You raise some good questions. Unfortunately, the answers are hard to come by. Because the electronic medium is so new, many of the rules still remain to be written. The point of my January column was that users need to be aware of these issues and may want to examine the policies of their service providers (although many of the service contracts are difficult to decipher).**

At the moment, the best advice I can provide is to have a healthy skepticism about the privacy of your online communications.

I was moved by David Sobel's piece on the government and AOL crackdown of child pornography (Operation Innocent Images) on the net (*The Net*, January 96).

I couldn't agree more with Sobel's spin on this. The real issue is not child pornography. The issue is, where does Uncle Sam draw the line in "protecting" the general public? If I download an image of a marijuana cigarette, am I propagating the use of that drug? If I download an image of a car that happens to be stolen, does that make me an accessory to grand theft auto? Applying the government's logic used in Operation Innocent Images, I'm guilty.

I don't believe in free expression of "art" when it includes people who unwillingly or unknowingly take part in that art. Children don't understand the true consequences or are tricked and manipulated by unscrupulous adults. If the 125 AOL subscribers stung during the FBI's investigation were also rounding up the kids, taking the pictures, and then using the online service for distribution, than let them face a harsh judgment. If they weren't, but were cajoled into distribution by masked FBI agents with AOL accounts, who's really guilty here?

It's appalling that AOL changed its delete feature prior to or during the investigation. While I'm sure AOL executives will deny it and give some technospeak reason for it, what possible reason could there be for not allowing people to unload unwanted mail other than to monitor what was in the boxes? Do they have so much space on their servers they can just let people's unwanted messages pile up? I doubt it.

This was, at a minimum, a huge public relations debacle... along the same lines as Intel's "Pentium Problem." But, more abjectly, AOL did a large misservice to all online providers. It will take years, if ever, for people to believe they're not being monitored by some unknown entity. AOL and Uncle Sam shamelessly took advantage of the Internet's inherent weakness — you never really know who's on the other end of the e-mail, IRC, message, or bulletin board. Or who's watching.

Rick Blackburn
blackbur@system.abacom.it

I read David Sobel's article and I find the points he raised to be very interesting, and I wonder about a few things that he didn't mention.

First off, I find child pornography to be vile and reprehensible. However, the FBI investigation "nailed" only 125 people out the total customer base of over 3 million. That's about .0042 percent (if my math is up to par). It almost seems that the majority needs to have its rights limited or compromised just to catch a minuscule-fraction minority of wrong-doers. I cannot condone AOL's involvement in this. So, as my new year's resolution, I will cancel my AOL membership.

And what about this cooperation to "remain free of government regulations"? I fear that without regulations of some kind, AOL and other service providers will, possibly, "bend over backwards to cooperate with the authorities" past the point of, in

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my humble opinion, reason. From what I have been reading, Internet and online service providers need to figure out how much responsibility they have for the actions of their subscribers. As of now, there are no guidelines or models that are being followed. I am concerned that I may be held responsible for unsolicited materials that I may have received. The points that David Sobel brings up are issues that need to be examined right away.

Then again, all this hysteria over porno is exaggerated and distorted beyond any reason. Pornography has been around for much longer than keyboards, scanners, and online services. Historically, porno has been involved in almost every "mass communication" advance in recorded history, from the printing press, to magazines and postcards and video tapes. I think that porno's existence in the net is not that surprising. And the government is doing the "same old thing" (entrap, capture, and prosecute) that it has done to pornographers in the past. Maybe it's time to figure out why porno has been with us for so long and how to educate us about it.

As far as responsibilities go, is the Message Center (provided by Pac Bell here in California) responsible for the messages it saves for its clients? Is a library responsible for the way its books are used? Are Mircrosoft, Apple, Hewlett-Packard, or IBM responsible for the way their software and hardware is used? Maybe that could be a starting point to straighten out this privacy issue.

Oh, by the way, *The Net* is the classiest mag about the net. Thanks for putting out a zine that makes me think and laugh.

Mike Rhodes
mirho@ccnet.com

The Bill of Rights Meets Cyberspace

I was very interested in your article in your August 95 issue (page 9) on the Constitution and how it needs to be rewritten to take into account current technology. I was particularly interested in the part about the bomb-making texts found on Internet. Something that you did NOT mention, and I think you should have is, that most of these so called "bomb-making" texts were originally written by the government.

Some, like the directions for Nitroglycerin, were written specifically to kill anyone who might try to make something like that. A great number of the others are merely copied out of Army Field Manuals, which are available to the general public through the Freedom of Information Act. Anyone can send postage and handling and a small fee to the United States Government and be mailed back a book with everything one needs to know to blow up the local Federal building.

I'm a supporter of the Freedom of Information Act and I think it's a good thing, because making knowledge forbidden just makes it more desired. If the government were to make these text files illegal, then the traffic would only increase.

My point is: It's cheaper to just go to the library or to mail the Army to get your bomb texts than it is to buy a computer, buy the Internet software, subscribe to a service, find an FTP or Web site that carries the texts, and download and print them out.

Joe Harris
joharris@freenet.columbus.oh.us

Re: AOHell

After reading your article on "AOHell vs. AOL" in your December 95 issue (page 14), I decided that I would "update" you about what is really going on, considering that no one really knows what truly is happening. AOHell is terribly old. It has updates every month and is now at AOHell 95 beta 5. There are a lot more programs out there on AOL, including Orca's Bot, Purged (a utility that quickly forwards all your mail), AOTurkey (a rip-off of AOHell), Doomsday, Ripclaw, Sw00p, AOPokis, SantaAOL, etc. The list goes on and on.

AOL has made a major crackdown on "hackers." It is now impossible to make "fake accounts." By doing this, AOL has increased the number of people asking for others' passwords. It seems that AOL has finally won this so-called "battle of the hackers." It is now no longer AOL vs. hackers, but AOL vs. ???.

I have to say that I am quite impressed with what AOL has done, although it still has "guides" and "TOSadvisors" who run around abusing their powers.

AERTDan1@aol.com

The article about AOHell in *The Net* was very interesting. I never knew that AOHell was actually that well-known. I've used AOHell myself mainly because the service itself was way too expensive and there was never a local access number in my area. I think most people used AOHell for those reasons and because they feel that America Online always censors what they can see and say. America Online, however, only solved part of the problem by having instant online credit checks. Users can still use AOHell to send e-mail bombs and they can still scroll pictures of guns and extended middle fingers.

So, there are still a few flaws that Steve Case [AOL CEO] will have to work through. I've stopped using America Online because I always felt that the service treated me like a child and because my bills were running up to $150 a month. An America Online representative has even admitted that I never received my 10 free hours after I canceled the account. What a ripoff!!!

Micah Williams
DGVL00B@prodigy.com

Stop Bashing AOL

I really love your magazine, and read it faithfully, but over the past couple of issues, I've noticed a disturbing trend, that being AOL bashing. It's obvious from your various articles and columns that you don't like the service, and if that's the case, then fine. But why must we be treated to a monthly tirade of your obvious hostility toward it? For some people, services such as AOL are the only connection they have to the Internet, as many Internet Service Providers do not have dial-ups in smaller communities. With all of the anti-AOL (and anti-online services in general) sentiment on the net right now, I was shocked to see you jump head-first into the foray, and help foster an atmosphere of hatred and mistrust!

dirtman@primenet.com

How come you're not writing from your AOL account? In any case, *The Net* believes its coverage of commercial online services is fair. We expound their virtues as well as examine the validity of reader complaints about them.

Paper Inc. Site

I have been trying for several days to log into the WebFX home page to get the Win3.1 version (January 96, page 47). I keep getting the message: "Netscape is unable to

"I wanna hold your hand!"

John Fonseca
Chief of Tech Support
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find the server www.paperinc.com. The server does not have a DNS entry. Check the server name (in the URL) and try again."

What do you make of this?

Thorton Gruntnipple
thorton@icacomp.com

The WebFX plug-in can be downloaded from our January CD-ROM, and it's also available at http://www.paperinc.com. We've logged onto the site, so the domain is working fine. It's very possible that the site is overwhelmed by hits and not responding up to par, hence the "server busy" and faulty DNS error statements. By the way, WebFX is a plug-in for Netscape 2.0, so if you aren't using Netscape 2.0, you should download that first at ftp://ftp2.netscape.com or http://home.netscape.com. Note: There is no WebFX for the Mac yet.

Raving

The first issue of *The Net* that I came across was the November 95 issue. I bought the issue while in New Jersey as something to read during a 13-hour car trip back to Dayton, OH. Once I started reading it, I could not stop until I was finished. The variety of subject matter, from online brownie recipes to the music-related Blue Pages to hacking (as in pushing the barriers to find limits or make changes to fit OUR society and not US fitting theirs), was not only vast, but each piece of material was unique unto its own style.

To find this in a modern magazine is very refreshing, as most tomes have turned toward corporate sponsorship, and would dare not bite the hand that feed them. Your magazine is not only honest and written to be both informative and entertaining, BUT it is to the 90s what tie dye and "groovy" were to the 60s. By that, I mean that you speak to the majority of people who make up the population of the net and you do it on THEIR level. I have not checked out every Internet magazine, but the four or so that I have read besides yours all seemed to be aimed at business men and women who simply use the net as tools to give their corporation a better image. I guess that they present their stagnant facts and images in such a manner so that they can get lots of funding from the superpower software and hardware companies. I can't blame them for wanting to be successful, but as I tossed their issues into the trash, I came to the conclusion that *The Net* (to which I both subscribe and save) speaks directly to me and does it on my level.

Wayne Stewart
stu2@erinet.com

I have bought almost every magazine on computers you could imagine. Your magazine stands out from the rest. I now buy two magazines: *Byte*, for its technical information, and *The Net*, for its great content. I recently bought *The Internet Yellow Pages*, but it fails to list some simple links. Your magazine lists up-to-date links that usually can't be found in *The Yellow Pages*. All in all, *The Net* is a spectacular magazine. I thank you, and I thank St. Jude for a great article on "Hacking" (January 96, page 11).

Zachary Porter Wright
jhwright@pgh.net

I was previously reluctant to pick up and read your magazine at the newsstand. Besides, I reasoned that all the numerous Internet-related magazines had the same shortcoming: They were aimed primarily at PC users, and thus failed to provide content of much interest to Mac-toting cybersurfers like myself. When I finally took a peek at your January 96 issue, I was surprised to find out that *The Net* contained just the right amount of Mac-relevant content. Whether you were reviewing Internet software or discussing the merits of emerging net technologies, it's good to know that your magazine tends to keep an open-minded, cross-platform perspective. For once, I've found an enjoyable Internet magazine that doesn't make me feel like "the invisible Mac user."

Marton Carungay
martonc@eworld.com

The Net magazine and *netPOWER* CD has great information that every Internet user can use. The CD/magazine contain great links to different places that normally I probably would never seen. Plus, the CD has some really unique items for both Mac and IBM compatibles, very cool! The magazine itself contains some very nice articles on what is available out on the Internet. The January 96 issue contained some great material on Virtual Reality Modeling Language and related net technology material. I am very pleased that I subscribed to *The Net*.

Jason Thompson
thompsoj1@coral.indstate.edu

Exception to Homer

A few comments regarding your review of the Homer.94 IRC client for the Macintosh (January 96, page 36). Everybody seems to agree that Homer is the best IRC program available for Macs, but compared to what?

Homer has a great user interface, which is very Mac-like, and takes some of the arcane features out of IRC. However, Homer is very buggy, and doesn't want to function properly at all times. For example, Homer often refuses to show all of the users on a channel, either on the user list or on the channel itself. Public text from certain users simply does not appear; only the user's private messages and actions can be seen.

Another problem I have with Homer is that the DCC feature does not work properly. Homer also tends to get weird with your TCP connection, seeming to corrupt it at times.

Still, Homer is the best we got for the Mac, problems notwithstanding. That doesn't make me happy, but what can I do?

William W. Bennett
wwbill@shore.intercom.net

CORRECTIONS:

PAINT SHOP PRO

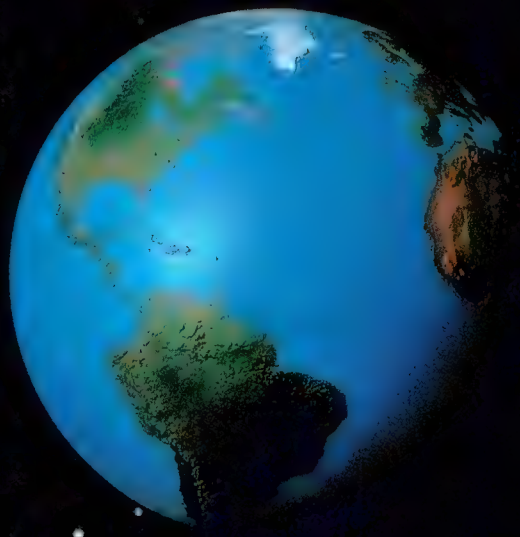
We missed the boat in our January 96 feature, "Bargains on the Net." We said that Paint Shop Pro is free. In fact, it costs $69 (not including a $5 domestic shipping charge). Also, the latest version is 3.12. Order by calling 800 622 2793. Shareware can be obtained from **ftp.jasc.com/pub**, or linked from the company's Web address (**http://www.jasc.com**) or from its BBS (612 930 3516).

- The Atari Jaguar is not, as we said in our January 96 issue, page 20, a 32-bit game console. It uses two 32-bit processors.

- On page 42 of the December 95 issue, we listed the incorrect ISBN for *The Internet New York* book (it is 1-56830-039-5) and *The Internet Chicago* book (1-56830-038-7). In Canada, Prentice-Hall's phone number is 800 567 3800; the price for each book there is $16.95.

- On page 87 of our December 95 issue, the URL for the IRC #CentPerk home page is incorrect. The correct URL is: **http://ccwf.cc.utexas.edu/~bhood/friends/centperk.html**

- Page 80 of our January 96 issue had the incorrect URL for the Direct Connection's Web Editing Resources page. It is **http://www.dircon.co.uk/dircon/wwwedit.htm** ■



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net trends

News Flashes About the Internet

Paradigm Shift at Microsoft

The Internet has made way for a world of new development tools and philosophies, and in this new kingdom, open, cross-platform systems are the emperors. The PC industry is quickly realizing that closed-systems architecture and proprietary software are on their way out. The paradigm shift is happening as you read this, and companies like Microsoft, IBM, and Lotus are scrambling to accommodate this change, lest they wither away with the Commodore 64.

So it was that, as 1995 wound down, Microsoft held a behemoth, melodramatic press extravaganza in Seattle, and announced and demonstrated more than 20 new products and services. It was an all-out effort to trumpet the company's new "wide-ranging commitment to the Internet." According to Chairman and CEO Bill Gates, "the Internet is the primary driver of all new work we are doing throughout the product line. We are hard-core about the Internet." Phrases like "Internet revolution" rang out as Uncle Bill told the press masses that he wants to give Microsoft's millions of users and developers the tools they need to "ride the Internet tidal wave." The business baron CEO hyped Microsoft's billion-dollar operating system, Windows 95, the server solution, Windows NT, and the Windows Office product line as "absolutely the best vehicle[s] for business use of the Internet."

Microsoft also demonstrated its seriousness about being part of the net revolution by announcing an intent to license Java from Sun Microsystems. The plan is to make the next version of Microsoft's Web browser, Internet Explorer, Java-capable. After all, Microsoft wouldn't want its users to be unable to play the Java-enhanced game *Vectorman* online (**http://www.vectorman.com**).

Microsoft also said it will collaborate with Oracle (another leading-edge developer of cross-platform Internet technologies) to exchange scripting, programming, and Web software technology. "We are excited to work with Oracle," said John Ludwig, vice president of the personal systems division at Microsoft. "By licensing the PowerBrowser OCX, Microsoft and Oracle can enable developers to bring dynamic and active content to the Web." Hmmm. Does this mean Oracle will be scrapping its supposedly secret, Internet-ready, open-architecture, affordable computer system development project to build yet another Windows-based machine? Certainly, only time will tell. Check back with us on this.

If you read the January issue of *The Net*, you know about VRML, or Virtual Reality Modeling Language (see pages 44-50), the emerging 3D standard for the Internet. Well, Microsoft has an answer for that, too. Also at the Seattle press conference, it described its ActiveVRML (creative name) as the "new technology to bring interactive 3D multimedia animation to the Internet." It should be no surprise that Microsoft says it "has submitted [Active VRML] as a VRML 2.0 proposal to VRML industry working groups" as an open-architecture standard.

And, Microsoft noted that it wants to protect us with its "Internet Code Safety Initiative." This initiative suggests a 150-company pact to utilize digital signatures for authenticating the validity of specific products and companies. This would guard against "potentially malicious code and viruses," according to Microsoft's press material. The technology allows users to set a predetermined list of manufacturers' applications that are "safe" for downloading; any files to be downloaded that aren't authored and "digitally signed" by a company on the list will cause a warning message to be displayed on your browser indicating the download may not be advisable. There's nothing better than spreading around a little paranoia about viruses to pump up and establish Microsoft as the white knight against hacker attacks and, of course, to promote its "safe" products as alternatives.

Like it or not, Microsoft is sure to be in the thick of most future Internet transactions, at least for the next few years. Heck, if all else fails, maybe Uncle Bill could just buy all the phone lines... For more information about Microsoft's Internet strategies, point your Web browser to the company's Web site (**http://www.microsoft.com/internet/**). — *Shel Kimen*

And a URL In Every Pot...

Every American should have Internet access, and new taxes should foot the bill. So recommends the Rand Corporation in a recently released proposal that should receive yeas from online evangelists and nays from analog Luddites, and prompt fits of confusion from Newt Gingrich and his pro-tech, anti-big government brethren.

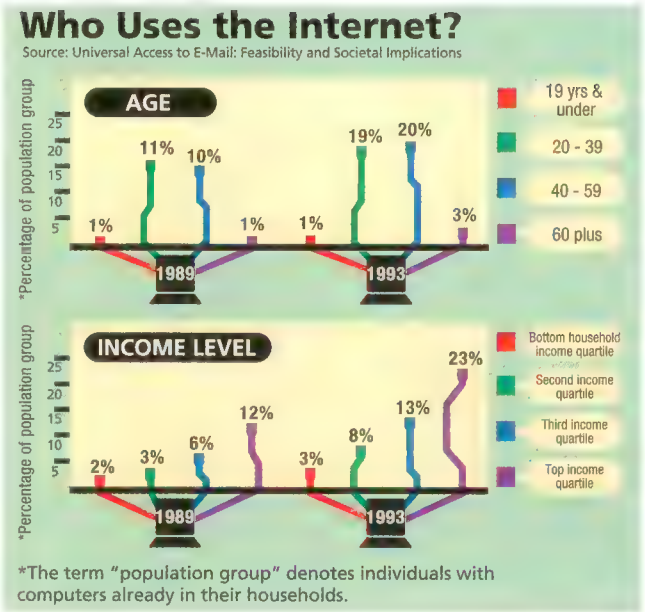
The sweeping proposal, titled "Universal Access to E-Mail: Feasibility and Societal Implications," argues that the chasm between information age haves and have-nots is ever-widening, and concludes that universal Internet access is necessary to close the gap and foster a more inclusive society. Universal access will enable all Americans, rich and poor, to more easily contribute to democracy, communicate with government bodies, and partake in the "commercial and government transactions" that increasingly occur online, the proposal says.

In lay terms, Rand proposes that each U.S. citizen should have his or her own e-mail address. It suggests installing computer kiosks in libraries, community centers, and other local venues to serve people

who don't have computers at home. Here's where it gets really messy for the Republican Revolution: "Although e-mail penetration is rapidly expanding, some program of economic assistance to marginal consumers may be necessary... Any e-mail assistance will require public funding from an industry-wide tax or from general revenues. Subsidies will need to be narrowly targeted to reach consumers who would not otherwise subscribe."

Economic assistance. Industry-wide tax. Subsidies. During a time of wholesale downsizing and all-around government-bashing, the proposal may appear out of sync with today's political zeitgeist. Indeed, the proposal was launched before the current Congress was elected — way back when Vice President Gore was exercising his bully pulpit as the nation's tech guru, and calling for the National Information Infrastructure, a new government arm whose first goal would be to establish universal e-mail access. Still, fiscal pragmatists and Cold War nostalgics may find some of the proposal's content favorable: Rand suggests universal access could support cost-effective "electronic delivery of major government services" — for example, filing Medicare claims or income tax forms — and proposes that the borderless nature of the Internet will help Americans spread the tenets of democracy among developing nations.

During two years of research for the proposal, Rand, a non-profit think tank, collected a wealth of information on online use and its impact on building communities. The proposal can be found at **http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR650/**, along with scads of demographic information on who uses the Internet. The proposal also focuses on various types of online communities, including LatinoNet, an America Online area that investigates cultural and political issues, and the Blacksburg Electronic Village (**http://www.bev.net/**), the Web page of Blacksburg, VA, which features direct links to local businesses, the local health care center, and government offices. — *Jon Phillips*



TEN: Pioneer of Next-Generation Online Gaming

The Total Entertainment Network (TEN) has designed an Internet interface that sets the standard for online service facelifts. The interface uses a single window. A toolbar running along the bottom lets users access Internet resources, as well as TEN's proprietary content. The user can seamlessly click from Web page to chat area without having to launch separate applications.

The Microsoft Network, launched last year, and Delphi have both taken a similar tack, but with somewhat less integration success than TEN has accomplished. Apple's eWorld online service, which has gotten out of the business of hosting local content and become more of an Internet gateway, would do well to look at TEN's technology. So would the "Big Three" online services — America Online, CompuServe, and Prodigy — which have taken a lot of flack from the Internet community because the proprietary nature of their software keeps their users insulated from the Internet. The TEN interface is the most likely model for any major redesigns online services are contemplating.

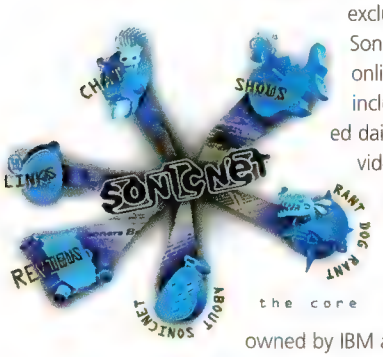
But all TEN wants to do is play games. The entire focus of its service and local content is online gaming. With the success of network-playable games like *Doom* and *Terminal Velocity*, the TEN concept is likely to be a winner. Games playable on TEN will include *Duke Nukem 3D*, *Terminal Velocity*, *Civilization*, and *SimCity*. High-action games like *Terminal Velocity* don't play very well over the slow-switching lines of the Internet, so TEN has leased access to a separate, high-speed network. The server room at the TEN offices in San Francisco has two OC3 lines, one active and one standby, that can carry up to 155 Megabits per second. TEN's rate structure is similar to AOL's, with a monthly fee of around $10, which covers about five hours of online time. There are additional charges for extra time used. At press time, TEN was still working on the pricing structure, including a model that would let players use more hours at a set price. TEN began beta testing on January 1. Registration and further information can be found at the company's Web site (**http://www.ten.net/**). Also, many popular new game titles will come with TEN software, so users will only be a button click away from accessing the network. — *Wayne Cunningham*

Who's Faster: Al or Newt?

Should we dump the Rand proposal (see above), or follow its recommendations and install universal Internet access across America? *The Net* decided to test the proposal's basic premise — that Internet connectivity fosters democracy — and sent this query via e-mail to Al Gore (http://www.whitehouse.gov/White_House/EOP/OVP/html/GORE_Home.html) and Newt Gingrich (georgia6@hr.house.gov). Check our Net Trends section next month to find out who answered first, who answered what — and who answered in person.

Prodigy Gets Hip

Aiming to cater to the Internet's twenty-something set of cyber-surfers for the first time, Prodigy has acquired stock in SonicNet, a New York-based division of Sunshite Interactive Network. SonicNet's Web site (**http://www.sonicnet.com/**) burbles from the bleeding edge of Web space hipness, providing material for alternative music fans. As part of the deal, SonicNet will give Prodigy members some original and exclusive content, a direct link to SonicNet, plus alterna-pop star live online chats. SonicNet's content includes listings of music events, updated daily, in five cities; weekly reviews of a video and a record; special shows and guests several times a week; and a "Rant Dog Rant" section with a weekly provocative "intertorial."



The investment marks the first time Prodigy, a joint venture owned by IBM and Sears, has directly funded a content provider on the Web. The funding came from a new Prodigy division called Wildflower Partners; it was created to fund Internet start-ups. For more information, call Prodigy at 800 PRODIGY or visit the Web site (**http://www.prodigy.com/**).

All-News Shows, All-Media Distribution

Financial news is getting hot, as a number of players launch ventures that will be available not only via cable, but also through the Web and online services. The Cable News Network has poured about $50 million up-front for CNN Financial Network (CNNFN), which is being distributed over cable channels as well as through CNN's site on the Web (**http://www.cnn.com/**), desktop computers (users must subscribe to CNN at Work), and AT&T's Business Network, an online service.

CNNFN's initial competition is from NBC's all-business news channel. Down the road, it will compete with all-news cable shows being developed by Capital Cities/ABC and by Microsoft and NBC. In a deal announced last December, Microsoft and NBC said they would be 50/50 partners in the MSNBC cable service, which will provide 24 hours of news and information programming. MSNBC, expected to debut mid-year, will replace NBC's existing America Talking, which currently harbors more than 20 million subscribers and has committed to reaching 35 million people by the year 2000. MSNBC will also be distributed over the Microsoft Network, Microsoft's online service. Microsoft is paying a whopping $220 million for this venture over the next four years. Visit either the Microsoft Web site (**http://www.microsoft.com/**) or the NBC Web site (**http://www.nbc.com/**) for more info.

VRML Browser For the Mac Debuts

Those on the Mac side of the fence can now download an alpha version of VRML Equinox, a special Web browser crated by North Plains Systems. It allows PowerMac users to navigate the 3D virtual spaces created by the Virtual Reality Modeling Language. Unfamiliar with VRML? Just think *Doom* (and its first-person navigational perspective), or check out the Top 10 VRML sites (**http://www.pulver.com/netwatch/topten/tt21.htm**), and you'll find links to the best 3D environments. VRML Equinox can be downloaded from the North Plains' Web site (**http://www.ipsystems.com/nps/**).

German Porno Laws Affect CompuServe's Subscribers Worldwide

In a move that has broad implications for the future of the Internet, CompuServe was forced in the last days of December 95 to block access by subscribers around the world to 200+ Usenet newsgroups. The newsgroups had been deemed sexually explicit by German authorities. According to CompuServe, "Each of the newsgroups suspended was specifically identified to CompuServe by the German authorities as illegal under German criminal law."

At press time, CompuServe said it was working with German authorities to resolve the matter, and investigating "ways in which we can restrict access to selected newsgroups by geographical location." It also noted that CompuServe, "as an access provider, is not responsible for the origination or nature of content on the Internet over which it has no creative or editorial control." A list of the banned newsgroups can be seen at the Electronic Privacy Information Center site (**http://www.epic.org/free_speech/censorship/CIS_banned.txt**). The action by CompuServe is likely to spur interest in surf-safe software that helps users block sites and newsgroups containing material considered undesirable for minors. *The Net* looked at some of this software in the February 96 issue (page 58).

Internet Killed the Radio Star?

First, music videos supplanted consumer interest in radio, and now comes the Internet. What's a humble station manager to do? Answer: Join the fray.

Last December, KCRW (89.9 FM in the southern California area) began posting Hollywood Wrap, a 15-minute program employing RealAudio technology, on its Web site (http://www.kcrw.org/). Hollywood Wrap is updated weekly, and includes entertainment industry news and interviews with behind-the-scenes potentates — the kind of people director Robert Altman skewered in *The Player*.

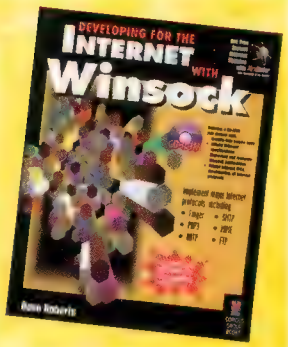
The program, which is only available on the Internet, is hosted by Nikki Finke, a veteran Tinsel Town journalist. Finke says, "It'll be plenty pithy and dishy — but definitely not wishy-washy. I hope to give Internet regulars the sort of insider's look into Hollywood deal-making that only we in L.A. know about."

Half-caf-half-decaf-double-non-fat-latte with that URL address, sir? ■

bookshelf

The Best Internet Books

Developing for the Internet with Winsock



Daunting. That's the word that popped into my head as I picked up this 600-page monster of a book, especially given its multiple references to the programming language C++ on the cover. But once I started reading the book, I discovered my fears to be unfounded. First, this book is exceedingly well-written for a programmer's manual. When the author isn't down in the trenches describing the functions of Windows Socket API, his commentary is quite personable and fun to read. The writing in the technical part is also very easy to follow, even for someone like me, who has a mere acquaintance with C++.

After a brief history of the Internet, the book gets into TCP and IP structures, and the concepts and functions of Windows Sockets. A chapter lists 12 C++ WinSock classes (an excellent programmer's reference), then that takes you through a basic programming project. Having an example to work on is a great way to learn. Later chapters delve into how to program for various Internet applications.

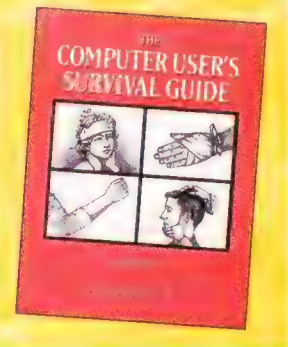
For $39.99, this book seems like an incredible value as a means of expanding a programmer's expertise. And, I haven't even mentioned the CD-ROM that comes with this book. It not only has the Winsock classes, so that all you have to do is cut and paste instead of rewrite, it also has some fun tools like a VRML browser. Good stuff!

— Wayne Cunningham

Info

Dave Roberts, Coriolis Group Books
800 410 0192
ISBN: 1-883577-42-X
$39.99 U.S.

The Computer User's Survival Guide



Interesting. Very, very interesting. I had no idea when I looked upon the book's cover illustration of bandaged, bruised, and stressed-out personalities exactly what it was that I would be surviving. I was prepared for a little dark humor, but I found nothing of the sort here. This book's about ergonomics and how to preserve your mental health if you use computers all day long.

It's thorough, and comes laden with diagrams to guide you toward attaining straight posture and proper keypad positioning. There are charts showing the appropriate distances between all the elements — chair, monitor, desk, etc. These medical recommendations don't come unsupported, either. Stigliani backs up her advice well with background information on how some of our muscles work. She also outlines specifically *why* and *how* these dangerous conditions hurt us.

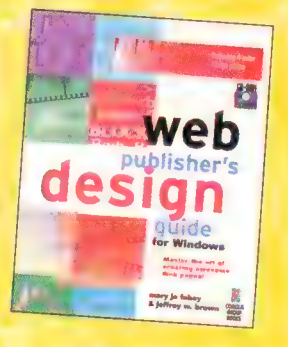
The section on stress is a little tongue-in-cheek, but if you're under enough stress to make *that* the reason you bought this book, then maybe tongue-in-cheek is what you need. There are skads of handy little lists of stress warning signs. These are followed by action steps that will help alleviate pain, stress, and miscellaneous health problems related to too much computer use. I'd say if you are working the 9 to 5 (or 6,7, or 8) computer-type job, you should go out right now and snag a copy of this book.

— Shel Kimen

Info

Joan Stigliani , O'Reilly & Associates, Inc.
800 998 9938, 707 829 0515
ISBN: 1-56592-030-9
$21.95 U.S.

Web Publisher's Design Guide for Windows



While there are several books on "great Web design" flooding the bookstores at exponential rates, some with less aplomb than others, I can highly recommend this one. It's fantastic for graphic designers creating Web spaces with Windows — that last part seems a bit paradoxical, but no matter.

The book offers an exceptional layout (as it should), and uses a very accessible tone that guides both new and experienced designers through the world of online publishing. It spans everything from how to specify background colors to tips for successful 3D rendering compression.

It pays serious attention to the different types of Web servers, why it's important to know about them, and what you'll need to learn to understand and take advantage of their various quirks. Image maps, texture maps, and pointers to other helpful reference materials give this book a well-rounded balance that significantly blows away others in its genre.

The companion CD-ROM is hardly worth mentioning (a few shareware programs and some HTML editors are included, but that's all). So, don't buy it for the disc included. Buy it because it's a great book (with a flashy full-color insert in the middle). It'll provide Windows users with a great start to designing Web pages.

— Shel Kimen ■

Info

Mary Jo Fahey & Jeffrey W. Brown
Coriolis Publishing, 800 410 0192,
ISBN. 1-883577-61-6
$34.99 U.S.

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Stevan Alburty

Forward Into the Past

Quoting the ex-husbands of Liza Minnelli is not a practice in which I frequently engage, but her first — songwriter and singer Peter Allen — often crooned (with far too much exuberance, I might add), "Everything Old Is New Again." That song title has been swimming upstream in my *tabula rasa* recently, for the personal computer industry is gingerly maneuvering its way back toward an architectural model that went out with the Nehru jacket: the dumb terminal.

Some of the biggest names in the business, including Compaq and Sun, are busy in their engineering labs designing stripped-down PCs (i.e., no CD-ROM, no hard drives) that will be good for nothing but browsing the Internet. Priced, or so the manufacturers aim, at under $500, these Internet-only boxes represent a return to the days when computing was much more fascist and far less fun.

Once upon a time, computers were bigger than your average New York apartment and required teams of men with overbites and crew-cuts to care for them. Users sat at workstations connected to these "mainframes" through fat cables and got migraines from staring at green screens that glowed and ghosted from old data left displayed during countless lunch hours, disjointed words and numbers now permanently etched like *data pentimenti* into the monitor's phosphors.

All of the users' crunched numbers and processed words, as well as the programs themselves, lived on the central mainframe computer. The workstations' sole functions were data entry and display. Although the cost of buying and maintaining one of these mastodonic mainframes was staggering, their efficiency from an organizational perspective was nonetheless impressive. A company's most valuable data, its institutional memory, was organized and could be accessed in a consistent, coherent manner.

In the late 1970s, the two Steves, Jobs and Wozniak, emerged from a garage south of San Francisco holding a prototype of the first mass-market personal computer. A shift of almost paleontological proportions had occurred: Programs and data were now placed at the local level, distributing both the processing and storage of information out to a diaspora of unconnected devices. A company's budgets, sales figures, and correspondence were stashed on fragile floppy disks and hard drives, which were rarely backed up and could be erased or carted off by a disgruntled employee faster than you could say "exit interview."

The PC industry is maneuvering its way back to an archaic model: the dumb terminal.

The advent of networks and servers brought modest improvements to this free-wheeling disorder, but many IT (Information Technology) managers still let users devise their own filing structures, and despite the development of Microsoft's object-linking and Apple's publishing and subscribing, the vast majority of user-created documents were still informational islands, swimming alone in a sea of isolated files.

In the mid-1980s, corporate IT managers fell in love with the concept of "client-server computing." In this architectural model, the processing and storage of data were returned to a central device, usually a mainframe, mini-computer or database server, while the display of the information was left to the PC, thereby preserving the aesthetic richness users had come to expect from more personal computing experiences.

Like all romances, the early passion for client-server computing soon gave way to some cold realities — the development costs and deployment issues often proved economically prohibitive and logistically complex. IT managers began wistfully pining for the old mainframe days, when all you needed to create an enterprise-wide application was some "big iron," a pencil-protector and a dream.

Internet "browser" software, like Netscape, is designed to sit passively on a user's computer and await display instructions from a remote Web site. "Here's a graphic, display it in the center of the screen," says the remote server, and the browser does what it's told. "And now, here's some text — make it look like a headline, etc." The browser is basically stupid. The real programming instructions are stored not on your PC, but on the Web site you visit.

This "browser-server" architecture is growing in popularity and power. Sun's Java programming language enables a Web site to bury small programs called "applets" within a Web page. Those miniature applets are then executed by the browser as it surfs the site. One applet might draw a chart using some sales figures. Another might add up a column of numbers, or beep and tell you you've just entered an incorrect zip code into an address field.

This type of advanced interaction between server and browser may enable the development of a new generation of business applications that run over the corporate Intranet and can be accessed through a new, 90's edition of the "dumb terminal." To paraphrase Guedalla's great aphorism, "History repeats itself. Programmers repeat each other."■

Stevan Alburty (**alburty@panix.com**) is a technology consultant and former MIS director of Chiat/Day Advertising.

David Sobel

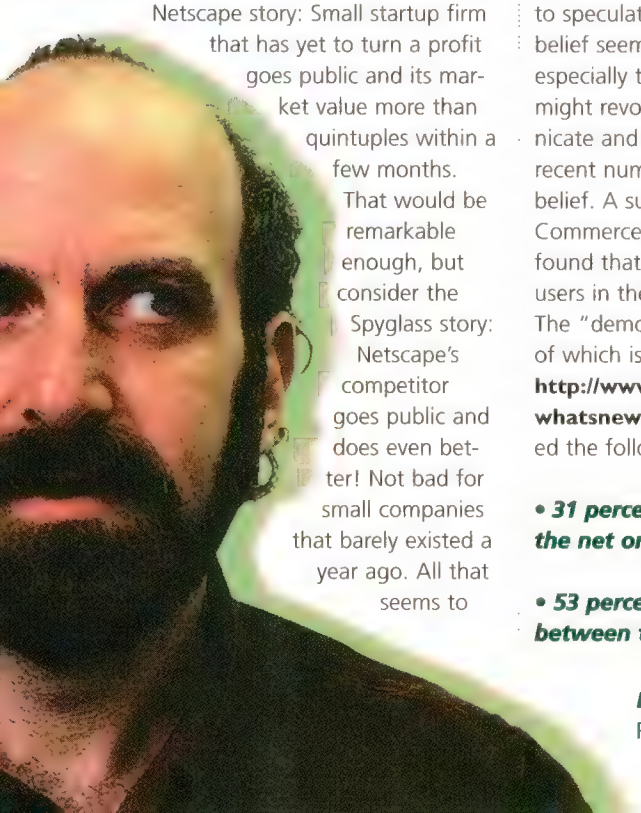
The Internet: Hype versus Reality

It seems that everyone is interested in the Internet these days. From Congress to Wall Street to your hometown newspaper, the rush is on to hitch a ride on the digital bandwagon.

I've been trying to separate the hype from the reality, and I'm finding that it's not easy.

As most people who follow net.issues know by now, Congress has decided that the Internet is becoming so pervasive that new laws are required to regulate its content. The reasoning seems to be that any 10-year-old can easily surf the net and access all manner of inappropriate material. Indeed, the legislative frenzy to control electronic "indecency" appears to have grown out of Senator James Exon's observation that his young granddaughter is computer literate. You know a technology has arrived when an elderly legislator from Nebraska decides it's a menace to the nation's morals.

Next stop, Wall Street, where "Internet stocks" are all the rage. Unless you live in a cave, you know the Netscape story: Small startup firm that has yet to turn a profit goes public and its market value more than quintuples within a few months. That would be remarkable enough, but consider the Spyglass story: Netscape's competitor goes public and does even better! Not bad for small companies that barely existed a year ago. All that seems to matter to investors is that these firms have something to do with the Internet.



Has your local newspaper gone digital yet? Mine has (*The Washington Post* recently went online with "Digital Ink"). There are a lot of things I like to access online, but the daily paper is not one of them. The hardcopy version only costs a quarter, so why would I want to incur the higher cost of reading it off my computer screen? And, aside from cost, why would I want to read it off my computer screen at all? I usually read the newspaper on the subway — it's one of the few remaining times when I can be untethered from my keyboard. I have not yet heard a good explanation of why I need a digital newspaper (but feel free to e-mail me if there's something I'm missing here). Despite the lack of need for this latest high-tech innovation, most major newspapers feel compelled to go online. They've gotta have a presence on the Internet.

You know a technology has arrived when an elderly legislator decides it's a menace to the nation's morals.

So, why is everyone from legislators to speculators jumping on the net? The belief seems to be that the Internet, and especially the World Wide Web, really might revolutionize the way we communicate and transact business. And some recent numbers appear to support this belief. A survey conducted for CommerceNet by Nielsen Media Research found that there are 24 million Internet users in the United States and Canada. The "demographic survey" (a summary of which is available at **http://www.nielsenmedia.com/whatsnew/execsum2.htm**) also reported the following:

- ***31 percent of Internet users access the net on a daily basis.***
- ***53 percent of Internet users are between the ages of 16 and 34.***
- ***25 percent of Web users have an annual income of more than $80,000 (compared with 10 percent of the general population).***
- ***64 percent of Web users have a college degree.***
- ***2.5 million people have already made purchases using the Web.***

These numbers explain a lot. In fact, the "Internet stock" hysteria really took off after the survey was released. For anyone interested in selling something on the net, these are great demographics. The Internet is populated by young, affluent, educated people — potential customers. Many of the net's early pioneers are not happy to see what's become of the old frontier. Some are even re-thinking their optimistic predictions of a digital utopia. One of the first reassessments came from Cliff Stoll, who's been on the net since its early adolescence. In his book *Silicon Snake Oil: Second Thoughts on the Information Highway*, Stoll writes that the Internet "is an overpromoted, hollow world, devoid of warmth and human kindness. For all the promises of virtual communities, it's more important to live a real life in a real neighborhood." I think that observation rings true for anyone who has spent time (too much time?) on the net. And, as the commercial billboards become more prevalent on the infobahn, it will become even less hospitable.

So, what's the hype and what's the reality? More people will come online, lots of money will be made, the technology will continue to improve, and government regulation will increase. But life as we know it will probably remain unchanged.■

David Sobel (**sobel@epic.org**) is a legal counsel to the Electronic Privacy Information Center, based in Washington, D.C.

St. Jude

Mutate This Afternoon, Please

From catspaw@Rt66.com
Subject: BigSys: Part Deux

Hullo Patroness of Lost Causes,

I agree with the idea of changing the culture; it could use a helluva lot of changing.... But, I ask, into what? My ideal end-product (no more medical moralizing, get Uncle off our backs, and a few more manners here and there) probably isn't even close to a lot of other people's ideal....
Tasty column; it convinced me to subscribe-

L. Y. Williams

Yow! What a response! The sincerest form of flattery is subscription. But look here, catspaw — How do *I* know; change society into what?

I'm just saying that society now fits us like a cheap shoe with a nail poking through the sole, and our usual response is to grow calluses... or corns. If we look at society as repairable — recobbleable, in fact — well, who knows what weird shoes we might wear? Makes my metaphorical toes curl!

Y'all keep whining at me to come across with some actual instructions for mutating, hacking the culture, etc. What do I have to do here? I keep commanding you to think for yourself, and you keep on not following my orders.

But here's an idea: Practice noticing, at least once a day, what you think you're doing. And, why the hell are you (doing it)? And, could you do it differently? This is the most elementary use of hacker mind — to hack one's own life, moment by moment.

I don't mean in favor of spontaneity. Spontaneity, pfui — instant magic, everything Zen, I think not. Zen archers, calligraphers, and seminar-givers practiced for decades to be spontaneous. It takes a certain amount of effort to be a successful hacker, especially of human behavior. Especially of your OWN behavior. Takes thought. Intentionality. Implementation.

Hacking your life seems like a place to start. If you find new ways of doing things — some people might call it pushing the envelope of weirdness — you might change everything. I'm not talking on the level of law, but on the sublevel of ADMISSABILITY. What is allowed to be thought, to be acted upon, before somebody calls the cops. I grew up in straightened circumstances (among straights) — and having more room to be weird is exquisitely pleasurable to me. Nowadays, society accommodates more, flexes more when you push at it, with less repressing of weirdies, less killing off of mutations. Maybe it's a good idea to push further. Pushing on:

This is the most elementary use of hacker mind: to hack one's own life.

Jude–
.... The whole idea of combining the concepts of beginner's mind, monkey mind, anarchism, and hacking into a new paradigm could very well bring about a new revolution, a new stage of evolution. There is NO area of culture that would not benefit from such a shift in thinking (you Peking Butterfly you).

Hacking in the trees,
L. A. Hazard

I'm reading evolutionary psychology right now — hold on, Hazard — Hey, YOU! Random browser, don't turn that page, you soundbyte, lemur-brained leaf-muncher. Listen! If you're ever going to start tinkering with your engines of creation, you'd better get a mechanic's knowledge of the machinery. I'm trying to tell you about *The Lemurs' Legacy* by Robert Jay Russell. He starts out suggesting we might at least seize the wheel of said machinery and take it for a wild ride, wooooooo.

He doesn't talk like that, however, and he goes on to detail our dismaying history. Oh man, the monkey behind our useful monkey mind makes a chilling read. But, we must know what we're working from. And understand how preposterous it would be to keep on keeping on. When we study evol psych we're examining the software that comes installed in our hardware, in our evolved meat body. From this, we can see about designing us some BETTER software. We can alpha-test new designs in ourselves, and beta-test them in our friends and sig others. And then... evolutionarily, what works better, persistently... supplants. Inherits the world. Engineered evolutionary success. Ahhh. If there are any evolution scientists out there, calm down. The idea of evolutionary success has a whole other dimension when you deal with humans, because our cultural entities — memes — have their own breeding rules, and you can spawn a planet full of brilliantly successful children overnight, via a single idea. This beats hell out of the old mutate/breed/evolve meatly stuff. Furthermore, only populations evolve in your meat model — individuals can't. NO fun. I think the mutate-yourself meme may be starting to ramify like fungus in the darkness of popular culture, and godz know what mutations will sprout and spread. Hmmm.

You, reader. Yes, YOU: You ARE gonna mutate and take over the world, right? *Next:* What's the ugliest part of your body? ■

St. Jude **(stjude@aol.com)** has written (with R.U. Sirius) a self-help manual called *HOW TO MUTATE AND TAKE OVER THE WORLD*, now in bookstores everywhere.

INTERNET
basics & beyond

The Internet is *The Net*'s home away from home, as it has become for many millions of others. Instead of going to the library, we research online. We save money on stamps and overnight mail by using e-mail for our personal and business correspondence, and we meet with people for live chats rather than spend big bucks on a plane ticket. And those of us who do have to fly somewhere use the Internet and the commercial online services for flight, hotel, and car rental information.

Even online experts are constantly learning new things from and about the net, and more and more beginners are hopping on the Internet track to work, play, and learn. This month's feature offers a netpourri of information on how to get online and how to take advantage of the net once you get onto this worldwide network.

Computer advertisements and television commercials are always touting the wonders of plug-and-play Internet connections, so we decided to investigate in-depth a few of these all-in-one computers. How easy are they to set up? Are they really plug-and-play, or are they simply easier to set up now than they were three years ago? Just what good does all that "free" software do for you? Our comparative chart is a great companion on your next computer shopping trip (see pages 21-25).

Moving on, we help you decide whether you should go with a commercial online service such as Prodigy, or pay a local Internet Service Provider for your net connection. We also calculate what a typical month's worth of net usage would cost on the major online services (see pages 26-28). Once you're online, you can find the sites you're interested in by using some of the many search engines out there. Check out our guide to the popular search engines, such as Yahoo! and Lycos (page 29), to find the one that's right for you. But if you want to visit some spectacular sites right away, or find a list of places to go for more help, try our recommended "First 10 Places to Visit" (page 30) and our "Web Resources" (page 31), respectively. Need some help figuring out what additional pieces of software you'll need to do things like watch videos or hear music on your computer? Our mini Helper Apps tutorial should provide some relief (page 32).

So, what are you going to do with yourself once you're online? One of the cool things we use the net for is to create custom newspapers that send us the news we want to read (pages 34-37). Do you like music? We offer a list of Web sites where you can get a taste of tunes, as well as software so you can hear the music (page 46-47). Or maybe gaming's your thing (pages 50-51). Is investment more up your alley? We'll show you where to get the best investor tips and advice (page 53). And not only that, we'll offer some tax tip sites, as well (page 55).

As you can imagine, there's no way we can cover even a small percentage of what's on the net in one issue. It's our hope, though, that if you're not connected, this will help you get online. And if you're already hooked, you'll find tips and topics that you just might not have traversed upon before. ■

COMPUTERS MADE FOR THE INTERNET

Kate Fleming

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How much would you pay for a computer with a 75 Mhz Pentium processor, a one gigabyte disk drive, a 28.8 Kbps modem, and a monitor with stereo speakers? Wait...Don't answer yet! What if I told you that you could have a quad-speed CD player, MPEG video, expansion slots, and a telephone answering machine? No, don't answer yet! Now, how about a bundle of free application software, CD-ROMs for the whole family, and four or five different ways to get onto the Internet? And it all comes in one box.

O.K., you can answer now. If you've spent any time in a consumer electronics store lately, you know the answer is around $2,500, and that term "all-in-one" means you can take a complete system home with you, confident it will have all of the necessary hardware, and plenty of software to get started. The combination of home multimedia and a hunger to get online has brought to market a class of Macs and PCs whose real-life buzzword is "plug-and-play."

We took a look at a bunch of all all-in-one PCs: Some are one-box units with monitor and CPU, while others are simply desktop and tower systems intended for home users. All included online, telephony, and multimedia features. We also spent considerable time with three leading systems: the Apple Performa 5215CD, the Compaq Presario 9548, and the IBM Aptiva M55. In addition, we looked at the specs for a number of other machines to give you an idea what to expect when you go shopping.

SPEC SHEET

Some people buy a computer based on the specs. Others buy one based on the software included, the graphical interface, or even the sound and video accessories. Home computer makers know this. Most models include the fast Pentium or PowerPC processors found in the corporate world. Hard disks are spacious, and nearly every one of these computers includes a quad-speed CD-ROM drive. You'll find that some manufacturers skimp a bit on RAM (offering only 8 Mb, where 16 is optimal and not much more expensive), and modems (lots still slog along at 14.4 Kbps). Home systems usually come with a mid-sized monitor, or a choice of a couple of monitors from the same manufacturer. True all-in-one PCs include a CPU, a monitor, and speakers in a single case. For those who don't want to tinker, home PCs provide custom interfaces on top of Windows 95 or the Mac OS, to make software easy to find and use. Software titles usually include an integrated Works package, financial management applications, a CD-ROM-based encyclopedia, games, and kids' programs. Custom graphical interfaces, like Microsoft Bob or Hewlett-Packard's Personal Page, are designed to make computing more intuitive. LaunchPad, an interface for kids, also has security features that protect your files from the little ones' curiosity. Not all home PCs include these interfaces, so seek or avoid them, according to your preference.

When it comes to software, it's quality, not quantity, that counts. The tags that say you're getting "a $1,200 value" should be taken with a grain of salt, since some of the software you get is either available only with a PC bundle or consists of demo versions of a product the vendor hopes to sell you later. Some machines have better bundles than others: Gateway 2000 and Compaq cram their boxes with interesting *and* useful software. Don't assume that all models from a manufacturer include the same software bundle. Take a look at the list before you presume that the high-end model you chose has the same

stuff as the all-in-one unit on display has.

WORLD CONNECTIONS

It seems that every home system comes with at least one online service membership kit. On all Windows 95 PCs, you'll find Microsoft Network (MSN). All Macs come with Apple's eWorld. Most PCs also give you America Online, CompuServe, and Prodigy kits, with free hours as the reward for signing up. IBM adds its own Internet provider, and Compaq bundles several services. But it's not the software you get that determines the quality of your access. After all, AOL disks are as ubiquitous as dirt, and lots of Internet software is shareware.

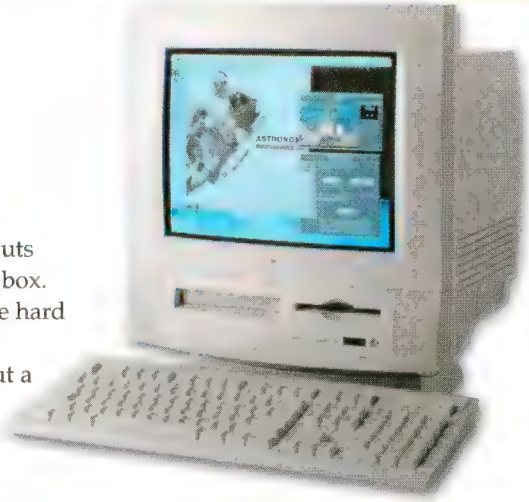
Despite the fact that Mac users account for more than their share of Internet accounts, it's the new breed of Windows 95 PCs that offer built-in SLIP and PPP connectivity. You can use Microsoft's integrated Internet Explorer to surf, whether or not you've joined MSN. Windows 95's net tools aren't ideal or complete, but they'll get you connected. You may have trouble if you try to use both MSN and an ISP account.

If you opt for a Mac and don't take the eWorld route, you'll have to get a SLIP or PPP tool (such as ConfigPPP) and browser software. Apple's MacTCP has, thankfully, been included with the operating system since the release of System 7.5.

When your modem isn't busy online, it can arbitrate fax and voice calls to the phone answering system included with most home PCs. Answering systems vary in interface and features, but basically, the computer takes your messages. IBM's Aptiva can even turn itself on when the phone rings. Compaq's Presario lets you check messages remotely with a voice-activated system. You can also create mailboxes for each member of the family. Fortunately, the answering system comes standard. There's no need to buy extra software or hardware.

A LOOK AT THREE ALL-IN-ONE COMPUTERS

apple macintosh Performa 5215CD



In the spirit of the compact Macs that started it all, the Performa 5215CD puts everything — CPU, monitor, speakers, microphone, and modem — in one box. Like its PC counterparts, the 5215CD includes a CD-ROM drive and a large hard disk full of software.

The 5215CD is the best Performa that Apple has developed to date. But a few little things — and it's always the little things that count — make it a great family machine.

pluses

The Performa is compact and easy to figure out.

The tutorials are good, and the Mac operating system is the least challenging of any out there, for kids and adults alike.

The machine comes with lots of good software, including the MegaPhone-based telephone answering system, ClarisWorks, Quicken, and the American Heritage Dictionary.

Most of the CDs are full-fledged titles, not demos designed to get you to buy full versions.

minuses

Apple has finally given up its past stinginess when it comes to hard drives. You get a 1 GB disk with the 5215CD. Unfortunately, the same can't be said for RAM. The unit comes standard with 8 Mb, which will accommodate two modest applications, or one big one. The system software takes up almost half of the available memory unless you do some tinkering with the System Folder. Also underpowered is the modem: a 14.4 Global Village Gold II model. It's a fine modem, with nice fax software, but it's a bit behind the times.

If you want to go online with the Performa, say hello to eWorld, Apple's online service and Internet access offering. eWorld, which looks like America Online with a face lift, has forums, downloads, and a Web browser (the latter is identical to the Mac version of the AOL browser), but you'll have trouble fitting the eWorld app and the browser in the 5215CD's 8 MB of RAM. Get a memory upgrade before you combine the Web with eWorld. The 5215CD does come with MacTCP, Apple's TCP/IP stack, but you'll need shareware or commercial connection programs and browsers to use an ISP account.

Bottom line

As all-in-one computers go, the Performa 5215CD is well-equipped, with a fast PowerPC 603 processor and most of the internal features you'll need to use multimedia and other demanding applications. Apple recently came out with a Powerhouse modular Performa, the 6300CD, which may better suit those who like maximum choice of monitor and expandability. Of course, it costs more.

compaq Presario 9548

Everything makes sense with the Compaq Presario. It's a well-designed, well-outfitted computer with a ton of cool software and the largest number of online options of any machine that we reviewed. Compaq sells three Presario form factors: all-in-one, desktop, and mini-tower. We looked at a mini-tower system with all the basics, some bells and whistles, and lots of room for expansion.

pluses

In addition to a nice box (100 Mhz Pentium, 1.6 GB disk, 16 Mb RAM) and a multimedia monitor (sold separately) with outstanding stereo speakers, Compaq excels on the software front.

In addition to the standard Windows 95 interface, Presario users can choose from TabWorks, Activity Manager, or LaunchPad; each offers a different view of folders and files. LaunchPad, for example, is a Berkeley Systems product tailored to kids. TabWorks looks kind of like a filing cabinet, with tabs representing application groups and folders.

Compaq doesn't have an online service or Internet Service Provider of its own. Perhaps that's why the disk contains so many choices for access. You can pick one of the big three online services or Microsoft Network, or more specialized services, like Reuters' MoneyNet and the ImagiNation Network. Netscape Personal Edition includes the Navigator Web browser, Eudora Lite mail software, and a registration system that will help you choose a service provider.

Compaq's telephone and fax software is full-featured and intuitive. You can create a voice-activated answering machine for your household, with mailboxes for each member.

minuses

You'll find lots of great software on the Presario, but no backup CD-ROM. If your hard disk dies and you need to reinstall the operating system, you're out of luck unless you've followed Windows 95's suggestion that you back up onto 30 floppies.

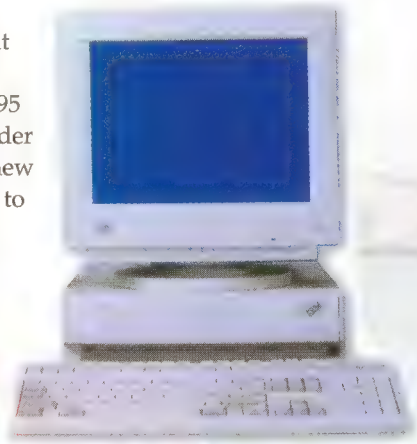
Another downer: There's a glitzy introductory video from Compaq that dazzles with graphics and sound. After it's over, you'll find yourself ushered into a similarly hip promo for America Online. The video and sign-up process run automatically and greet you before you've even had a chance to scope out other online options. This creates a Mack truck effect that we didn't appreciate.

Bottom line

Compaq and its machines are class acts. Given the quality of computers, monitors, sound, and video, they're reasonably priced, and come in enough permutations and expansion options to satisfy lots of budgets.

The software bundle and operating environments are great, and the setup is relatively painless.

IBM Aptiva M55



The Aptiva is the only line of computers we know of that offers a choice of operating systems. You can get IBM's OS/2 Warp, or the ever-popular Windows 95. Until Win95 shipped, you could also get an Aptiva with Warp and older versions of Windows. Due to the persuasiveness of the new Microsoft offering, OS/2 Warp machines now have separate model numbers. You have to choose before you buy.

In other respects, Aptiva is a standard PC. Speakers are included with this and all models, and you can buy one of several multimedia monitors separately.

pluses

Aptiva M55 is a nice machine. It includes a fast (100 Mhz Pentium) processor, a large disk drive, and 16 Mb of RAM. Including the speakers with the CPU is pretty nifty. So is putting in a 28.8 Kbps modem and telephone answering system, which can turn the machine on when the phone rings. You also get MPEG support and CDs that take advantage of it. Your online access choices include IBM's own ISP, as well as the Microsoft Network, AOL, CompuServe, Journalist (a CompuServe-based clipping service), and Prodigy.

IBM offers an innovative support option called HouseCall. By dialing into your machine, an IBM technician can poke around, diagnosing configuration and other problems remotely while talking to you over the same phone line. That's a lot more efficient than trying to describe your setup over the phone — especially for novice users.

minuses

The whole operating system choice arrangement is a bit confusing. Our Windows 95-only Aptiva included instructions for choosing between OS/2 Warp and Windows. A sticker on the box also promised "one-button Internet" with Warp. We were looking forward to that. But through Aptiva's tutorial, which runs at startup, was adequate, it didn't do much to help us get online. With it, we could easily find our way to IBM's Internet offering and the online membership kits for the included online services. However, no mention of the Microsoft Network, the differences between, or advantages of, the different services was present. Like many online services with electronic sign-up, IBM's doesn't offer price information until you've gotten online and, incidentally, entered your mailing and credit card info. ■

Bottom line

The M55 is a very good machine in the upper-middle performance range, but it's a bit pricey at $2,599 without a monitor. There are several Aptiva models (with 75 Mhz Pentium processors and 8 Mb of RAM) below $2,000. All offer the same software bundle and some form of upgrade path.

NET-READY COMPUTERS GALORE

A COMPARATIVE INDEX

Vendor	Apple	Apple	Compaq	Compaq	Compaq	Gateway 2000
Hardware						
Model	Performa 5215CD	Performa 6300CD	Presario 5528	Presario 7170	Presario 9548	P5-75 Family PC
Form Factor	all-in-one	desktop	all-in-one	desktop	minitower	desktop
Processor	75 MHz PowerPC 603	100 Mhz PowerPC 603e	75 Mhz Pentium	90 Mhz Pentium	100 Mhz Pentium	75 Mhz Pentium
RAM (Expansion)	8 (to 64)	16 (to 64)	8 (to 72)	8 (to 128)	16 (to 136)	8 (to 128)
2nd Level Cache	256k	256k	none	256k (optional)	256k	N/A
Disk	1 Gb	1.2 Gb	1060 Gb	840 Mb	1.6 Gb	850 Mb
Video RAM (Expansion)	N/A	N/A	1 Mb (to 2 Mb)	1 Mb (to 2 Mb)	1 Mb (to 2 Mb)	1 Mb
Expansion Slots	1 LC PDS	1 LC PDS	1 ISA	1 ISA(1), 1 PCI, 1 ISA/PCI	3 ISA, 1 PCI, 1 ISA/PCI	3 ISA, 2 PCI, 1 ISA/PCI
Modem Data/fax	14.4/14.4	28.8/28.8	19.2/14.4	14.4/14.4	28.8/14.4	14.4/14.4
Monitor Specs	15" RGB, 0.28 dot pitch	Apple Multiple Scan 15 Display: 15' RGB, 0.28 dot pitch	14", 0.28 dot pitch	**(2)**	**(2)**	14" SVGA
Microphone	built-in	built-in	built-in	inc. w/monitor **(2)**	inc. w/monitor **(2)**	optional
Speakers	built-in	built-in	built-in	inc. w/CPU	inc. w/monitor **(2)**	yes
MPEG-Capable	w/optional card	w/optional card	yes	yes	yes	optional
Video Input	w/optional card	w/optional card	no	w/optional card	w/optional card	no
Software						
Operating System	Mac OS 7.5	Mac OS 7.5	Windows 95	Windows 95	Windows 95	Windows 95
OS Environments	At Ease 2.0	At Ease 2.0	TabWorks, Activity Manager, Launch Pad	TabWorks, Activity Manager, Launch Pad	TabWorks, Activity Manager, Launch Pad	Microsoft Bob
Telephone Answering System	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Online Services	eWorld	eWorld	America Online, CompuServe, Prodigy, Imagination Network, Global Network Navigator, Reuters Money Network, Netscape Personal Edition	America Online, CompuServe, Prodigy, Imagination Network, Global Network Navigator, Reuters Money Network, Netscape Personal Edition	America Online, CompuServe, Prodigy, Imagination Network, Global Network Navigator, Reuters Money Network, Netscape Personal Edition	America Online, CompuServe, Prodigy, Microsoft Network
Warranty (years)	three	three	three	three	three	three
SRP (3)	$1,999	$2,799	$1,999	$1,699	$2,499	$1,799
Monitor Prices	N/A	N/A	N/A	14SB $299 Compaq 150i $359	1400 $399 1500 $499	N/A
Contact Phone Number	800 776 2333	800 776 2333	800 888 5858	800 888 5858	800 888 5858	800 846 2000

NOTES:

(1) A second ISA slot contains a modem.

(2) Monitors sold separately. Speakers and microphone included.

ALSO: All models in this chart come with quad-speed CD-ROM drives.

(3) OS configurations have separate model numbers.

(4) Microsoft Network comes with systems that include Windows 95.

N/A = Information not available at press time.

Note: More comprehensive information can be found on **netPOWER** and on our **Web site** (http://www.thenet-usa.com)

Gateway 2000	Gateway 2000	Hewlett-Packard	Hewlett-Packard	IBM	IBM	IBM
P5-100 Family PC	P5-120 Family PC	Pavilion 5030	Pavilion 7050	Aptiva M30	Aptiva M55	Aptiva M70
desktop	desktop	desktop	minitower	desktop	minitower	minitower
100 Mhz Pentium	120 Mhz Pentium	75 Mhz Pentium	100 Mhz Pentium	75 Mhz Pentium	100 Mhz Pentium	133 Mhz Pentium
8 (to 128)	8 (to 128)	8 (to 128)	8 (to 128)	8 (to 128)	16 (to 128)	16 (to 128)
N/A	256k	512k optional	256k (to 512k)	512k	512k	512k
1 Gb	1.6 Gb	850	1260	1 Gb	1.6 Gb	1.6 Gb
2 Mb	2 Mb	1 Mb (to 2 Mb)	1 Mb (to 2 Mb)	1 Mb (to 2 Mb)	1 Mb (to 2 Mb)	1 Mb (to 2 Mb)
3 ISA, 2 PCI, 1 ISA/PCI	3 ISA, 2 PCI, 1 ISA/PCI	3 ISA, 2 PCI	5 ISA, 2 PCI	1 PCI	1 PCI	1 PCI
28.8/14.4	28.8/14.4	14.4/14.4	14.4/14.4	28.8 data/ 14.4 fax	28.8 data/ 14.4 fax	28.8 data/ 14.4 fax
15" SVGA	N/A	**(2)**	**(2)**	**(2)**	**(2)**	**(2)**
optional	optional	inc. w/monitor **(2)**	inc. w/monitor **(2)**	inc. w/CPU	inc. w/CPU	inc. w/CPU
yes	yes	sold separately	sold separately	inc. w/CPU	inc. w/CPU	inc. w/CPU
yes	yes	no	no	yes	yes	yes
no	no	yes	yes	w/optional card	w/optional card	w/optional card
Windows 95	N/A	Windows 95	Windows 95	OS/2 Warp or Windows 95 **(3)**	OS/2 Warp or Windows 95 **(3)**	OS/2 Warp or Windows 95 **(3)**
Microsoft Bob	Microsoft Bob	Personal Page	Personal Page	Launch Pad	Launch Pad	Launch Pad
yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
America Online, CompuServe, Prodigy, Microsoft Network	America Online, CompuServe, Prodigy, Microsoft Network	America Online, CompuServe, Prodigy, Microsoft Network	America Online, CompuServe, Prodigy, Microsoft Network	America Online, CompuServe, Prodigy, Internet Access Kit, Journalist for CompuServe, Microsoft Network **(4)**	America Online, Compuserve, Prodigy, Internet Access Kit, Journalist for CompuServe Microsoft Network **(4)**	America Online, Compuserve, Prodigy, Internet Access Kit, Journalist for CompuServe Microsoft Network **(4)**
three	three	one	one	three	three	three
$2,199	$2,499	$1,699	$2,199	$1,799	$2,599	$2,999
N/A	N/A	15" $400	15" $400	Start at $359	Start at $359	Start at $359
800 846 2000	800 846 2000	800 724 6631	800 724 6631	800 426 2968	800 426 2968	800 426 2968

When Should You Choose a Commercial Online Service?

Minda Sandler

The decision about how precisely to get on to the Internet has been made much more difficult, or much more exciting, depending on how you look at it, by the phenomenal growth and popularity of the World Wide Web.

The Web is a graphically based interface to much of the Internet — and getting access to the Web is often the motivating factor for many to get online.

It took the online services years to give subscribers Web access, but now, America Online, CompuServe, and Prodigy all offer Web browsers and Internet access. So does the Microsoft Network, the online service Microsoft launched when it introduced Windows 95 last August.

How do you know if a commercial online service is the right choice for you? A lot depends on what you want to do online. If you plan to spend a lot of time on the net, the commercial online services will quickly eat up a big chunk of your money each month, since they usually charge by the hour after you've used up a certain number of "free" hours per month. A better route for you would be to join an Internet Service Provider (ISP), either a national or local one (more on that on page 28).

On the other hand, if you're very new to the online world, the commercial online services can be quite useful. This is particularly true if you don't have any other communications software. In addition to Web access, they have members-only content that is a big drawing card. Lots of people sign up with one of the online services to get their feet wet in the online world, then start an ISP account once they've decided they want to spend more time on the net.

Below you'll find information about the major online services, to help you see if one is right for you at least for now.

Sign-up Numbers: 800 827 6364, 703 448 8700
Pricing Structure: $9.95 a month (includes five hours); $2.95 for each additional hour.

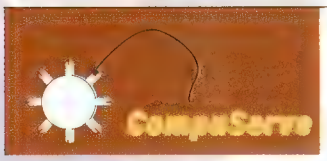
AOL is geared to adults in their 20s and 30s. It's particularly good for online beginners, because it has step-by-step screens to help you navigate through the service.

Pro

- Access to the Internet is relatively simple, and you'll be able to effortlessly move back and forth between American Online and the net.
- AOL lets you connect using 28.8 Kbps modems in most U.S. cities, which is nice if you plan to visit the graphically intense Web a lot.
- People who are somewhat intimidated by computers or the net will find that AOL offers a buffer between them and the technology. For instance, there's voice-prompting to tell you when you have personal mail, and to give you a brisk good-bye when you sign off. You may find this either terribly annoying or comfortably reassuring.
- AOL offers an easy-to-use service — My Home Page — for setting up your own home page on the Web. Each AOL member gets 2 MB of space (approximately 25-40 Web pages). That makes setting up a Web page a pretty painless process.

Con

- AOL updates its gateway screens with tremendous frequency. It can be incredibly frustrating to have to wait for what most users consider gratuitous artwork anyway to load (especially since you're paying for the time it takes AOL to update the screen).
- AOL's Web browser, which is integrated into its regular service, is not great, especially in comparison to what Web browsing is like with the Netscape browser.
- A lot of people in the Internet community are derisive of AOL addresses, which could make some of your interactions on Usenet newsgroups a bit unpleasant.



Sign-up Numbers: 800 848 8990, 614 457 8600
Pricing Structure:
Regular Subscription: $9.95 a month (includes 5 free hours); each additional hour is $2.95.
Super Value Club: $24.95 a month (includes 20 free hours); each additional hour is $1.95.

Traditionally, CompuServe has reflected the needs of the most typical users of the net: male, white, aged 30-50, experienced with computers, and affluent. It's also been more serious-minded than AOL and Prodigy, catering to a business-minded audience. Unlike AOL and Prodigy, CompuServe hasn't built a Web browser into its interface. Instead, it's turned its access lines into a nationwide Point-to-Point (PPP) connection network.

Pro

- You get to choose whichever Web browser you'd like (and many of the choices available can be downloaded from CompuServe, including CompuServe's Spry Mosaic browser).
- Having a less graphically intense interface hasn't meant a sacrifice of ease-of-use: CompuServe's icons and menu bar are both user-friendly.
- CompuServe's decision to provide a PPP hookup means that you have a direct link to the Internet.
- You're responsible for finding your own software and making configurations work smoothly, which is great for those who want flexibility and choice.
- CompuServe offers Web page creation forms.

Con

- Getting to the Web is a bit more difficult and requires you to work a little harder than you have to on the other services. It's also less easy to move back and forth between CompuServe and the net.
- It's less pretty than the AOL, Prodigy, or Microsoft Network.
- You're responsible for finding your own software and making configurations work smoothly, which is not so good if you don't like twiddling with configurations or having to go look for software.

Prodigy

Like AOL, Prodigy is designed to be colorful and personable. It's also especially geared toward families with children. It was the first commercial online service to offer Web access.

Sign-up Number: 800 776 3449
Pricing Structure:
Basic Plan: $9.95 a month (includes) five hours; $2.95 for each additional hour per month.
30/30 Plan: $29.95 a month (includes 30 free hours of usage); each additional hour per month is $2.95. [Prodigy recommends that once you spend at least 12 hours online a month, you upgrade to the 30/30 Plan.]
Notes: All members automatically enroll in the Basic Plan, but can choose to upgrade to the 30/30 Plan once they've joined.

PRO

- Like AOL, Prodigy is quite easy to use, especially if you're familiar with Windows.
- Again, like AOL, Prodigy makes access to the Internet relatively simple, and lets you effortlessly move back and forth between Prodigy and the net.
- A redesign of what was once a clunky and outdated interface has brought Prodigy roaring into the 90s.
- There's friendly and good tech support.
- Prodigy's Web browser, which like AOL's is integrated into the service, is functional and easy to use, though it's only available to Windows users.
- Prodigy offers an easy-to-use service — Prodigy Web Pages — for setting up your own Web page and storing it on Prodigy at no extra charge. The service has 10 fill-in-the-blank templates that let people who aren't skilled in HTML create their own pages. People who've created more complex pages using Web authoring tools of their choice can cut and paste their pages into a "free-form" template and use Prodigy to store them. Prodigy also has its own Web authoring program.

CON

- Prodigy has a family appeal that might turn off the 20-something crowd.
- Access can be slow due to its heavy graphical interface.

Microsoft Network

Microsoft Network is built in to Windows 95, so you have to have a PC, Windows 95 (which costs $109 as an upgrade or $209 for a new installation), and a modem to use the online service. To turn MSN into a true Internet connection, you need to get the Internet Jumpstart Kit, an add-on that's available through Microsoft Plus! ($54.95).

Sign-up Number: Information available at http://www.msn.com/msn.htm
Pricing Structure:
Standard Plan: $4.95 a month (3 free hours); each additional hour is $2.50
Frequent User: $19.95 per month (20 free hours); each additional hour is $2.00

PRO

- To use Microsoft Network (MSN), all you need to do is double-click on the MSN icon on your desktop and you'll be walked through the sign-up process.
- The sign-up sequence, welcome page, and the graphic navigational system were designed by highly respected Web site designer Clement Mok Designs, and this shows. The design team has stayed away from the graphically intense design used by AOL and Prodigy in favor of a spare elegance that doesn't require extra waiting time for the graphics to load but still looks great.
- MSN's Internet connectivity is quite fast.

CON

- In the first few months after the release of Windows 95, there were many horror stories about difficult installations of MSN, and the tech support number is not toll-free.
- The MSN portion of the service is quite slow.
- You have to have Windows 95 to use this service.
- Microsoft's Web browser, Internet Explorer, disables other browsers you might have on your computer.
- Microsoft says it's working on versions of MSN for Windows NT and Mac clients, but hasn't set release dates yet. No version is planned for Windows 3.x.
- MSN doesn't let you use e-mail readers other than its own Microsoft Exchange, or newsreaders other than MSN.
- You can't yet set up a home page on MSN. ■

How They Stack Up

This chart shows how much you'll spend each month on the four online services discussed here if you spent 10, 20 and 30 hours online.

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

Minda Sandler

If you're intent on spending a lot of time on the net, want the flexibility of being able to choose your access software, or want less hand-holding than you'll get from a commercial online service, choose to access the net through an Internet Service Provider (ISP).

With an ISP, you won't have to worry about anything getting in the way of you and the net, and for many people, that's a good thing. For those who want a bit more of a buffer between themselves and technology, or some guidance as they wander the black hole of cyberspace, the online service route may be a good way to go (see pages 26-27).

Using ISPs requires that you have certain software — WinSock if you're a Windows user or MacTCP if you have a Mac. And it will have to be configured properly before you're able to log on to your provider's Internet host and explore the net. One advantage of going the ISP route is that, often, you're able to choose the kind of mail, news, FTP, and Web software you like best. Much of this software is free and downloadable from the net.

PRICING RESEARCH

Prices for ISPs vary, and so do the services involved. One golden rule to guide you as you do some ISP research: Don't sign up for anything where you must pay more than $20-$30 a month for the account (this doesn't include, of course, hourly fees; you'll usually have to pay a dollar or two — or less! — an hour to be on the Internet). Also, be sure to find out about one-time account setup fees.

Before you start your search for the perfect ISP, talk to your friends, neighbors and relatives to hear some first-hand experiential information about what they're using. If you want a local ISP, look through the phone book.

If you have Web access, check out Yahoo!'s list of providers at **http://www.yahoo.com/Business/Corporations/Internet_Access_Providers/**, or view the list of providers located at **http://www.celestin.com/pocia/index.html**. The ISPs are divided into free, nationwide, 800 toll-free service, and regional, for easy searchability.

BEFORE YOU SIGN UP

There are a number of questions you'll want to ask an ISP you're considering signing up with:

1. **Can I set up a free guest account?** This will let you do some trial-and-error checking to see how well things work, what kind of tech support and instructions you get, how often you get a busy signal when you try to connect, and how easy it is to set up and configure the software.

   Try to sign up for several different trial accounts for comparative purposes before you take the plunge.

2. **What kind of software will I need, and how can I get it?** Will I be using a suite of software provided by the ISP, or will I have to choose my own? If I do have to get my own, does the ISP give me recommendations about where to find it and how much to pay for it?

3. **Is there any sign-up or software activation fee?**

4. **How does the ISP support users?** Is there a 24-hour tech support line? Is the number toll-free?

5. **Does the ISP have points of presence (POPs) in areas where I plan to travel to?** This is important if you're going to use your net access while you're on the road.

6. **Does the ISP have and support 28.8 kbps access?** Does it have and support ISDN connections? Is there any cost extra for using ISDN? These questions are important if speed of connection is important you.

7. **Is there full access via TCP/IP?** This is important if you plan to access the net from a dial-up line at home and/or a network connection at the office.

8. **Is there a choice between monthly and hourly fees?** If so, take the one that's least costly, in case you decide to switch to another ISP somewhere down the road.

   You can always change the payment plan to fit your usage patterns once you've been online for a while.

9. **Does the ISP have HTTP servers on its systems?** Can I link my directory of text and graphic files to them so I can set up my own Web site?

   Also important: Is there a charge for storing your personal pages on the ISP's servers?

10. **Does the ISP make list servers like majordomo and listserv available to me for use in creating a mailing list from my account?** How will you be charged for this — a flat rate, or by each message exchanged? If you plan to run an active mailing list, look for an ISP that charges a flat rate.

11. **Am I able to rent a dedicated line and my own Web server from the ISP?** This would be important if your Web site or mailing list becomes popular ■

A Look at Some National ISPs:

Netcom NetCruiser
Contact: 800 353 6600; download the NetCruiser software from Netcom's Web site (**http://www.netcom.com/netcom/software/cruzwin.html**).
Platform: Windows 3.1 and MS DOS 5.0 or higher.
Pricing: One-time setup fee: $25. Forty hours of prime-time access is: $19.95 per month (each additional hour is $2.00); access during non-prime time hours is free.

PSINet's Pipeline USA
Contact: 800 827 7482; download Pipeline USA from the Web site (**http://www.usa.pipeline.com/info.html**).
Platform: IBM PCs or compatibles running Windows.
Pricing: Monthly charge is $19.95. Five-Hour Option: You pay $5 for five hours, then $1.50/hour thereafter.

Concentric Network
Contact: 517 895 0500; visit the Web site at **http://www.cris.com/.**
Platform: Windows, Mac
Pricing: Beginner's Plan: $7.95/month (five free hours); each additional hour is $1.95. Intermediate Plan: $19.95/month (20 free hours); each additional hour is $1.50. Unlimited Plan: $29.95/month for unlimited usage. 800-Number Plan: 10/month (two free hours); each additional hour is $5. Direct Connect Plan: $10/month (unlimited usage).

Note: All prices listed here are subject to change.

Browser Bonanza

Crystal Waters

Netscape, Netscape, Netscape. This company makes the most popular browser in the world, and even if you've never even been on the net, you've probably heard the name — or bought the stock, or wish you'd bought the stock.

But there are many other companies that have published browsers, and whether you're simply curious or a net maniac, you'll probably find that each may offer something another one doesn't: speed, platform support, easier access. Or, maybe you just want to be the person on your block with the most browsers. Here's a brief rundown of a bunch of browsers available — it's far from being a complete list, but definitely includes the ones you've most seen or heard about.

Navigator 2.0

Netscape Communications
http://www.netscape.com

So why is this browser so cool, especially when its betas can cause crashes and heartbreak? It's almost as simple as what Mom used to say (and sometimes still does): Because I *said* so.

Well, nothing's really that simple. Despite beta bugs and past implied security problems, Navigator remains the top choice for browsing because of the number of extensions it supports.

While presentation doesn't improve the quality of information on a Web site, it does make for a more pleasant experience: aligned graphics (left, center, right), tables for information organization, text wrap, various font sizes, background colors and patterns, text colors, and other supported visual goodies. It's fast, intuitive, easy to learn, and 2.0's drag-and-drop bookmarks file make organization of those sites you want to access regularly a breeze.

America Online Browser

America Online
http://www.aol.com
800 827 6364

America Online was the second of the Big Three commercial online services to come out with a browser, and thankfully, it provides software for both the Macintosh and PC. However, its browser, while supporting such HTML tags as background colors and color text tags, still lacks in

performance. Even when accessing the Web via a T1 line, AOL's browser drags. The lack of a comprehensible status bar or icon always gives the feeling that nothing is happening except for a crash, even if that's not the case. On the plus side, though, AOL gives Web access availability to its now 4 million+ members.

NCSA Mosaic

National Center for Supercomputing Applications
http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/SDG/Software/Mosaic/NCSAMosaicHome.html

Mosaic, the first well-known graphical Web browser, was developed by the National Center

for Supercomputing Applications. Marc Andressen, the master of Netscape Navigator, was a developer of Mosaic before he headed off into commercial land. While its heyday has fallen way behind due to its lack of support of many Netscape HTML extensions, Mosaic is still a snazzy and dependable browser, and it's free for the taking. Its most annoying "feature" is the way it loads a page — text first (which is a good thing), but then graphics pop up and move the text as they are loading, which can be annoying if you want to start reading while images are loading.

Lynx

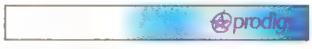
University of Kansas
http://www.cc.ukans.edu/about_lynx/about_lynx.html

Sure, the Lynx browser is not one many of us outside the universities will ever use, but since you may have heard about it, we decided to include it in this list. Lynx is a text-based browser for Unix platforms, and the first hypertext browser ever developed. Being text-based, it doesn't provide all the glam and graphic effects touted by other browsers, but Lynx brought us the concept of hypertext — linking of a word or words to a related site that is accessible by a click. It's something that we all take for granted, whether in the online world or in software.

Prodigy

Prodigy Services Company
http://www.prodigy.com/

Prodigy was the first commercial online service out of the gate



with a Web browser that offers direct access to Web pages from within the service. While it's far from being slick or fast, it does offer Prodigy members low-cost access (especially under the service's 30/30 plan, for which members basically receive 30 "free" hours for a monthly charge of $29.95). Prodigy software is available for free from the company. Call 800 PRODIGY and tell them what platform you'd like software for. Prodigy members can jump INTERNET; the service's browser software is available for download. At press time, only Windows-running members have the privilege of having a browser available.

Microsoft Internet Explorer 2.0

Microsoft Corporation
http://www.microsoft.com

Microsoft's answer to Netscape's Navigator, Internet Explorer 2.0, is a slick browser that not only takes advantage of HTML 2.0 extensions, but also adds some proprietary extensions. So users

get some cool advantages: stationary backgrounds, inline video, background music, animations, and auto-scrolling text, all which make for some potentially jazzed-up pages. Be warned: Internet Explorer works only under Windows 95.

Spry Mosaic

CompuServe Information Services
http://www.compuserve.com/

Quarterdeck Mosaic

Quarterdeck Corporation, Inc.
http://www.qdeck.com/

I'm lumping these two together, even though they're from two

different companies — it seems that any

company named Mosaic seems to sport the same features or lack thereof. Both cover the basics, but offer little as far as flash or pizazz.

WebExplorer

IBM
ftp://ftp.ibm.net/pub/WebExplorer/

This, again, is probably a browser not too many of us will happen upon in our Internet ventures. WebExplorer from IBM is a browser for OS/2 Warp, and as far as we know, it's the only one available.

eWorld Browser

Apple Computer
http://www.eworld.com/

Ah, eWorld, the little Mac online service that could. Though it has far fewer members than the Big Three, eWorld has an impressive selection of proprietary content. While its browser is the same as AOL's, for some reason, it gives a more satisfactory ride. No, eWorld's browser doesn't whip along, but it's definitely faster than its AOL counterpart. ■

First 10 Web Sites to Visit

Crystal Waters

It's hard to decide on what's best out of the millions of pages on the World Wide Web. But we've tried to come up with a list of suggestions that should get you started hyperlinking around the globe in an educational and entertaining fashion. Get clicking!

Boba World

http://gagme.wwa.com/~boba/bobaworld.html

If anyone on the Internet can be considered a veteran, it's Bob Allison, founder and keeper of Boba World. This place is info- and link-land galore. It includes such treasures as Uncle Bob's Kid's Page, The Michael Jordan Page, Uncle Bob's Christmas Page, Tips for Web Spinners, The Web Master's Page, The Beatles, The Spider's Web (where you'll find Spider's Pick of the Day — always a popular, "cool" site), The Scarecrow's WWW Link (offering the most amazing ASCII art — or art created with text characters — possible), plus suggestions of recommended newsgroups. And, there's more, more, more.

The Enhanced for Netscape Hall of Shame

http://www.meat.com/netscape_hos.html

Whether you just want to be entertained by this site's links, or you're a Web page creator who wants to learn what *not* to do on your pages, this site is a treat. It doesn't concentrate on just ugly stuff, though. You'll also find categories such as "The Most Painful" and "Dizzy." Web weavers will find "Texture Land" a great source of tons of choices of background textures for pages (although some are pretty eye-shattering).

Cool Site of the Day

http://cool.infi.net/

Hey, every site wants to be considered "Cool Site of the Day" by Infinet — it's a sure way to get a bazillion hits from surfers. There's also a "Categorically Cool" page — dedicated to bringing us cool stuff in the categories of knowledge, art, home pages, bizarre, and commercial sites — plus an archive of past cool sites. Be prepared, though, to have a hard time getting onto the site that's chosen that day — everyone else is trying to get there, too.

Remembering Nagasaki

http://www.exploratorium.edu/nagasaki/

Remembering Nagasaki, hosted on The Exploratorium's site (located in the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco), is a quietly elegant photographic journey and discussion of issues on the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki. Its photographic journal, "Nagasaki Journey — The Photographs of Yosuke Yamahata," is both beautiful and haunting. Images and words written on the day after the bombing poignantly underscore the tragedy. This is digital storytelling at its best.

SALON

http://www.salon1999.com/

Sponsored in part by Apple Computer, Borders Books, and Adobe Systems, SALON is a new online journal of "books, arts, and ideas." There are book excerpts, interviews, and discussions. The premiere issue features an interview with Amy Tan discussing her third novel, *The Hundred Secret Senses*; *The Kiss Patrol* by Armistead Maupin (reprinted from Dog People: Writers and Artists on Canine Companionship, published by Artisan); a roundtable discussion on race; and a selection of departments, columns, comics, and reviews (movie, TV, music, and multimedia). Put this one up on your laptop's screen when you leave it on the coffee table.

c|net online

http://www.cnet.com

c|net claims to be the fastest growing site on the Web, and that's not too hard to believe. Its more than 265,000 registered members are treated to daily news and features on such topics as "Build Your Own Web Site" and "Finding the Fastest Access Providers." The site includes tons of reviews of software and hardware. It also sports a huge shareware download area called Virtual Software Library. Plus, it lets you keep track of what's on the weekly "c|net television" show, chat with other members, listen to RealAudio broadcasts of c|net Radio, and much more. A great resource for real-life computering.

TV Net

http://www.tvnet.com/TVnet.html

O.K., so one of the purposes of becoming an online guru is to slowly wean ourselves away from television. But TV Net is just so chock-ablock full of everything from links to "X-Files" forums to national television listings to show ratings to a listing of TV professionals' e-mail addresses, and on and on and on, that it's hard to resist. Another great TV site is TV Bytes (**http://www.parkhere.com/tvbytes/**). It's a resource for hundreds of television show and commercial theme songs.

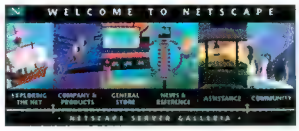
Useless Pages

http://primus.com/staff/paulp/useless.html

The master of this page, Paul Phillips, explains its origins by noting that "the discovery that someone had typed in his entire 30K CD collection for WWW consumption prompted me to generate the Useless Pages page." Since its inception, the Useless Pages site has had more than one million hits. Phillips continually updates the useless page archive to bring us links to total wastes of time, along with his pithy commentary.

Netscape

http://www.netscape.com



Netscape's Navigator browser software is estimated to be used by 75 to 90 percent of the Web-cruising population. Whether you use the Netscape browser or not, the site is a place to find resources on interesting sites to visit, industry news and developments, Web creation resources, and more. It includes links to net search engines, net directories, and, of course, hosts its own very popular "What's Cool?" area.

Mr. Showbiz

http://web3.starwave.com/showbiz/

A service of Starwave, Mr. Showbiz is a daily-fed Web site dedicated to entertainment — not only in what it covers, but in its manner of coverage, as well. Join in on celebrity chats, read interviews with supermodels, rap about politics, read tabloid headlines from around the world ("MOVE YOUR BUTTAFUOCO OUTTA HERE!"), and more. ■

WORTHWHILE WEB RESOURCES

Crystal Waters

Whether you want information on how to navigate the Web or on how to do heavy-duty design of your own Web site, there are tons of online resources to help you out. We've gathered together a list of recommended sites that can aid you in your cyber journeys.

World Wide Web FAQ
http://sunsite.unc.edu:80/boutell/faq/www_faq.html

Got questions about the Web? Well, the World Wide Web FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions), written by Thomas Boutell, has the answers. Basics such as "What is the Web?" and "Where do I go to get browsers?" are covered. There's also server setup info, Web term definitions, newsgroups directions, and much more. This is a great place for both beginners and more advanced net users.

Global Village's Internet Tour
http://www.globalcenter.net/gcweb/tour.html

Found in the corporate site of Global Village (a popular modem manufacturer), the Internet Tour takes you on an interactive tour

of the Global Village server ("so you can't get lost"), then launches you on to other sites. The tour escorts you through some typical activities a new Webbie might like to do, such as checking the stock market, researching software, hiring a graphic designer, and finding a government document.

ILC Glossary of Internet Terms
http://www.matisse.net/files/glossary.html

Want to know what ADN means, or where BITNET got its name? Then the ILC Glossary of Internet Terms is a good first stop on the way to Internet enlightenment. From tech terms like FDDI (Fiber-Distributed Data Interface) to explanations of ever-popular acronyms such as IMHO (In My Humble Opinion), the Glossary will give you plenty of terms to throw around next time you want to impress your local MIS person or fellow party-goers.

The Unofficial Internet Book List
ftp://rtfm.mit.edu/pub/usenet/news.answers/internet-services/book-list

This twice-monthly updated, FTP-accessible list gives a comprehensive round-up of new books on the Internet. Save some time at the bookstore by perusing the prices, ISBNs, and usually a little write-up about the book itself. There's also contact information, such as author and/or publisher e-mail addresses, and Web sites where you can find out more.

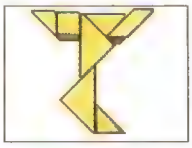
The Websurfer's Handbook
http://www.galcit.caltech.edu/~ta/handbook.html

O.K., so this site is kind of stupid, but it's fun. Home of the "Web-to-English Dictionary," the Websurfer's Handbook gives such definitions as "Hotpotato *n. the English pronunciation of http://*"

and "sink back *v. To retrace steps required to get to a favorite site when you accidentally toast your hotlist. Example: I crashed before I could save the URL, so I had to sink back to NCSA What's New.*" Best of all, you can add your own funky definitions to the list.

Thalia's guide for WWW-providers
http://www.sci.kun.nl/thalia/guide/index.html

Meant for people starting out in the Web-making world, Thalia's Guide includes tips for designers, users, and those who maintain Web sites. There are links to just about everything you could want — from HTML converters to icon libraries to tips on creating a great Web site.



Lynda's Homegurrrl Page
http://www.earthlink.net/~lyndaw/

Our very own Web design-o-rama wonder Webstress Lynda Weinman has gathered up what must be the best collection of

Web design tips and tricks information available.

Here, you'll find links to image map secrets, CGI resources, hexadecimal churners, and more (including a link to my page!).

Netscape Corporation
http://www.netscape.com/
http://home.netscape.com/assist/net_sites/html_extensions.html

If you're going to be designing Web pages, then it's a must that you put the Netscape site on your bookmarks list. Every HTML extension supported by Netscape's Navigator is here — demoed and explained. Or, do what I do: View the source code in Netscape's example pages and rework it to your liking for use on your own page.

A Beginner's Guide to HTML
http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/demoweb/html-primer.html

NCSA has excelled at putting together the definitive primer on HTMLing, from defining tags to creating in-line images to troubleshooting. ■

searching for Sites

Even the most experienced Web users need help finding stuff among the millions of sites now available for our perusal. Here, we profile some of the most popular search engines.

Yahoo!
http://www.yahoo.com/

Yahoo! is probably the most well-known of all the search engines out there. It's easily browsable or searchable by keywords.

Lycos
http://www.lycos.com

Lycos is easily searchable by keywords, and provides rated matches to each word — listing sites that match all keywords, then sites with one or more keywords. Lycos is also browsable.

InfoSeek
http://www2.infoseek.com

InfoSeek offers a paid service where you get an extensive search for a monthly fee. It's also announced a free service called InfoSeek Guide (**http://guide.infoseek.com**).

WebCrawler
http://webcrawler.com/

WebCrawler lets you type in your keywords, choose whether you want the engine to find sites with "any" or "all" of the keywords mentioned, and specify how many of the results you'd like displayed.

WWWWorm
http://www.cs.colorado.edu/home/mcbryan/WWWW.html

While it lacks the browsability of Lycos and Yahoo!, WWWWorm does have a fast and simple interface. Search by URL or title, match all or any keyword, and choose how many matches you wish it to find. ■

HELPER APPS:

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR BROWSER

Crystal Waters

As advanced and fancy as some browsers have become, it's still impossible for them to do everything. For example, most popular browsers have the ability to display common types of images such as GIFs and JPEGs, but some don't. Browsers generally also don't know how to play sounds (and we all know that going to a TV theme song site and downloading sounds is a crucial part of net life). However, helper applications, or apps, are programs that your browser can "call" when it needs help in running a video file or sound, or showing an image.

Most of the helper apps are shareware or freeware that are available on a majority of the commercial services, in software/shareware archives, or on shareware/freeware distribution disks, such as our our *netPOWER* CD-ROM, or discs that come with Internet how-to books.

As we mentioned in a previous article on setting up helper applications (see *The Net*, Sept. 95, pages 76-79), there's a really easy way to tell when you're in need of a particular helper application.

If you find yourself suddenly unable to view a sound or image whose link you've clicked, your browser will notify you that it's not set up to deal with a file of this type. In other words, that's a file for which you need a helper application.

Typical image and sound file types in need of a helper app are JPEG, GIF, TIFF, MPEG video, QuickTime video, and PDF (Adobe's Portable Document Format). Images most commonly in need of a helper app are less usual formats, like video, PDF, and TIFF images. The common audio file types requiring apps are AU, AIFF, WAV, RealAudio, and MPEG audio. Luckily, one helper app each for video, sound, and images will usually take care of many of the image and sound formats you'll encounter.

Below, you'll find some suggested helper applications for playing certain formats, as well as some suggested places to find the software if you're unable to read our CD-ROM.

APPS & THE FILES THEY HELP WITH:

Image/Video Apps →	Key File Formats Supported
MPEG Player (Macintosh)	MPEG video
QuickTime Player for Windows	QuickTime video
LView (Windows)	JPEG, GIF
Acrobat Reader (Macintosh)	PDF (portable document format)
Sparkle (Mac Sys. 7.5 or later)	MPEG video, QuickTime video
JPEGView (Macintosh)	JPEG, JIFF, GIF, PICT, LZW-compressed TIFF
GraphicConverter (Macintosh)	PICT, TIFF, JPEG, JIFF, GIF

Sound Apps →	Key File Formats Supported
WPlany (Windows)	AU, AIFF, VOC, WAV
WHAM (Windows)	WAV, VOC, IFF, AIFF, AU, and RAW
SoundApp (Windows)	AIFF, AIFF-C, MooV, AU, WAV
SoundMachine (Macintosh)	AU, AIFF, AIFC
MPEG Audio (Macintosh)	MPEG audio
RealAudio Player (Macintosh, Windows)	RealAudio (real-time audio broadcast on the net)
StreamWorks (Macintosh, Windows)	StreamWorks (real-time audio and video broadcast on the net)

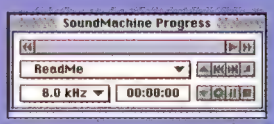
WHERE TO FIND HELPERS:

Windows

- **ftp://ftp.cica.indiana.edu**
- **ftp://ftp.ncsa.uiuc.edu/Mosaic/Windows/**
- **ftp://ftp.support.apple.com/pub/apple_sw_updates** (for QuickTime for Windows)

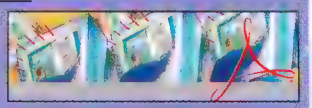
Macintosh

- **ftp://ftp.ncsa.uiuc.edu/Mosaic/Mac/Helpers**
- **http://wwwhost.ots.utexas.edu/mac/main.html**



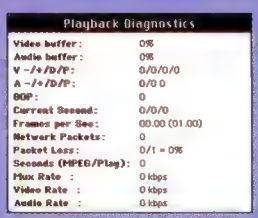
Windows/Macintosh

- **Adobe Acrobat Reader http://www.adobe.com/Software.html**

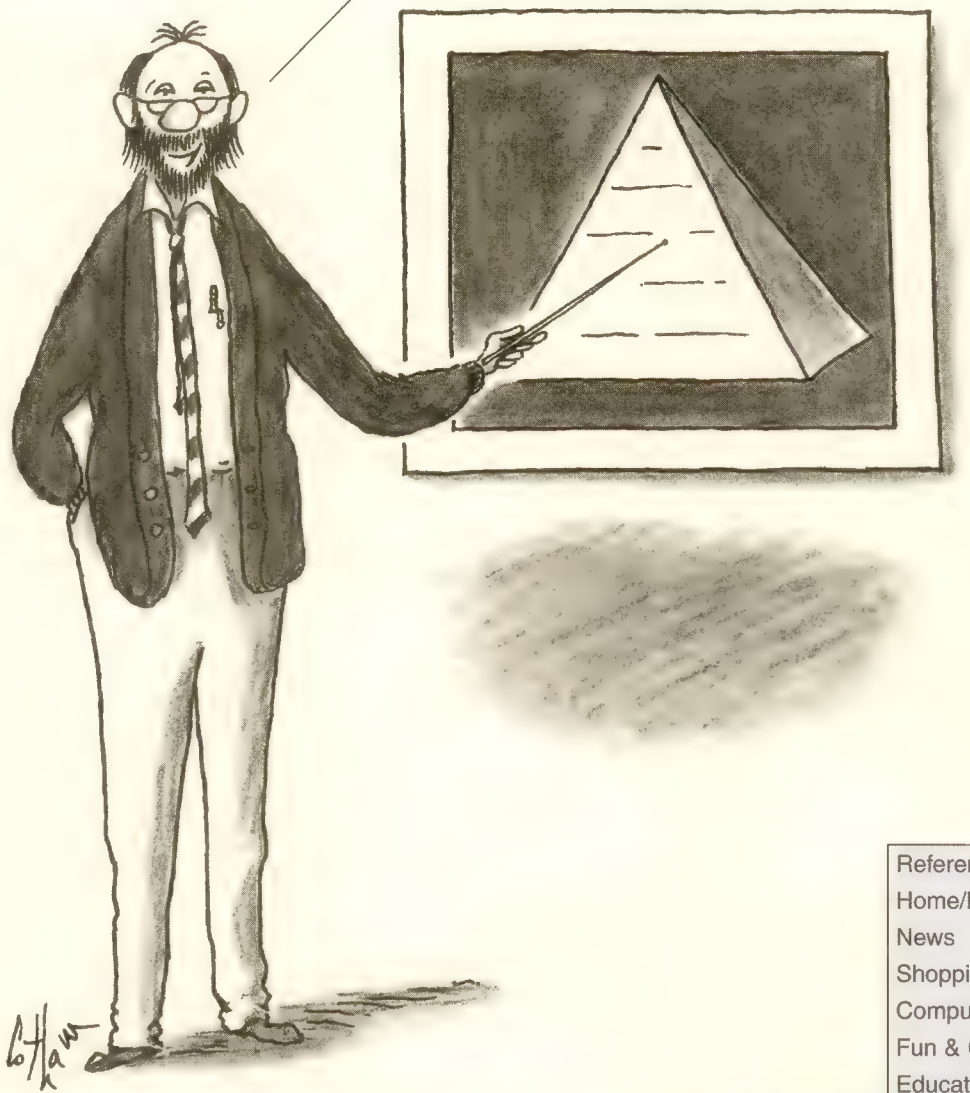


- **Progressive Networks' RealAudio http://www.realaudio.com**

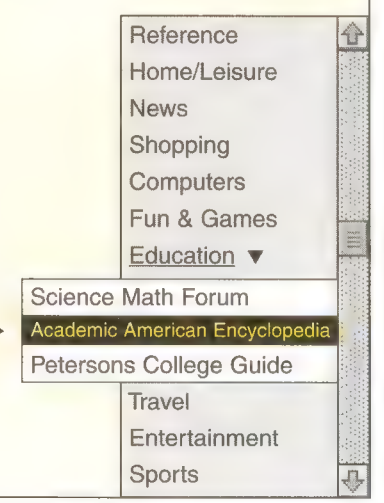
- **Xing Technology Corporation's StreamWorks http://www.xingtech.com/** ■



©1995 CompuServe Incorporated



Sometimes life calls for deeper answers ▸



If you thought all online services were the same, think again. For just $9.95 a month, CompuServe gives you Internet access and more detailed information on the subjects you're interested in than any other online service. Because CompuServe has the strongest relationship with the best sources for news, sports and entertainment, you're always plugged in to *Fortune, Comedy Central* and *Entrepreneur,* just to name a few. Don't be left only half-informed ever again.

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AN H&R BLOCK COMPANY

enter COMPUSERVE. CALL 1-800-487-4838 FOR FREE SOFTWARE AND 10 FREE HOURS.

STOPPING THE PRESSES:
REINVENTING THE NEWSPAPER IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Stevan Alburty

"The newspapers! Sir, they are the most villainous, licentious, abominable, infernal — Not that I ever read them! No, I make it a rule never to look into a newspaper."

— Act I, Scene 2,
"The Critic" by Richard Sheridan

It is the industry that refuses to die.

Faced with hemorrhaging circulation and spiraling costs, America's newspaper industry is engaged in a battle of survival as dramatic as many of its own headlines. The battle is not new. Thirty years ago, Carl Lindstrom predicted in *The Fading American Newspaper* that "it is entirely possible in the not-so-remote future that [the daily newspaper] will go the way of the street-car." In the last 50 years, the number of U.S. households has tripled, yet the ratio of newspaper circulation to households has dropped by half.

Threatened first by the immediacy of television, newspapers are now facing fresh competition from a vigorous new foe: the world of online services and the Internet. This is, as we are frequently reminded, the Age of Information, and the appetite for that information is fueling much of the dramatic growth of digital communications. The desire for news has not diminished, but ink on paper seems increasingly cumbersome and inefficient as a delivery vehicle for the news.

Newspapers across the country are rapidly responding to the challenge by developing supplemental products designed solely for electronic consumption, products with increased functionality that add real value to their readers' lives.

The San Jose Mercury News' Mercury Center Web site (http://www.sjmercury.com/) has helped to redefine the newspaper for the electronic era.

Those of us who are "news junkies," those unfortunate fiends forced to prowl newsstands late at night in our insatiable lust for greater and deeper information highs, can now satisfy our demon habit in the privacy of our own homes, our bleary-eyed faces illuminated only by the feeble glow of a computer screen.

NEWSPAPERS THAT FETCH THEMSELVES

Hundreds of newspapers now offer a Web-based derivation of their traditional paper product. A list of them is conveniently published on Yahoo! (**http://www.yahoo.com/news**).

But there is no point in merely replicating a newspaper's content online. It brings no significant added benefit to the reader. And a computer cannot compete with a traditional newspaper as a display mechanism – you can't fold a computer in half and flip through it in the back of a taxi, and it is difficult, if not outright dangerous, to fill out the crossword puzzle on a computer while you're soaking in the bathtub. The true value of online newspapers shines forth when the content they contain is somehow personalized for your benefit through the power of a computer.

As befits its location and stature in the heart of the Silicon Valley, the *San Jose Mercury News* (**http://www.sjmercury.com/**) has been a leader in redefining the newspaper for the electronic era. Its polished and professional Web site offers non-subscribers the headlines and

All The News That's Fit To Mail: News Services that Deliver Articles Via Electronic Mail:

(Prices quoted are "suggested retail prices" at press time and do not reflect special offers or discounts to charter members.)

Farcast
http://www.farcast.com/
$39.95 per month.
Sources: 5,000 stories daily. AP, Business Wire, PR Newswire, and Newsbytes, plus stock quotes. No browsable archive, but searchable via e-mail requests. See Farcast in action by sending e-mail to **demo@farcast.mcom**

HeadsUp
gopher://gopher.enews.com/11/news_services/headsup
$29.95 per month; includes five full-text articles per month. Additional articles $2.97 each.
Caution: Can get expensive.
Sources: 50,000 stories daily. Hundreds of magazines, newsletters, and newspapers from the U.S., Canada, and the U.K.

NewsHound
http://www.sjmercury.com/hound.htm
$9.95 per month.
Sources: 2,000 stories daily. *San Jose Mercury News*, Knight-Ridder/Tribune News Service, the Associated Press, Scripps-Howard News Service, Kyodo News Service, Business Wire , PR Newswire. Access to archives extra through separate subscription service.

top stories of the day, plus searchable classifieds. Subscribers to the Web site have full access to the entire paper, and can search the archives. Since the San Jose Mercury News has some of the best technology reporting in the country, the Mercury Center Web site is an invaluable resource for hard-core information and just plain gossip about the computer industry.

The Mercury News's NewsHound service delivers stories to you around the clock.

But it is the *Mercury News*'s **NewsHound** service that really excels. Rather than wait for you to come to the news, the news comes and finds you. NewsHound actively delivers stories to you 24 hours a day based on lists of keywords you maintain. The paper's mainframe scans articles from its own paper, as well as the Knight-Ridder/Tribune News Service, the Associated Press, Business Wire, and the PR Wire — more than 2,000 articles daily. As it finds matches, it sends them out over the Internet to your e-mail account. Since the stories are selected and mailed to you almost immediately once they are filed by the editors, NewsHound gives you the sense you'd get if you were standing in the newsroom watching the stories come over the wire.

HeadsUp from Individual, Inc. is another e-mail based service, but it claims a daily bounty of more than 15,000 articles. Based on a keyword list you provide, HeadsUp mails you a "digest" each day with a list of headlines and a brief abstract of each story that meets your criteria. Full-text stories are only delivered on demand; you have to send back an e-mail containing the story's I.D. number. Unlike NewsHound, which dribbles out news throughout the day, HeadsUp delivers one digest per morning, a frequency some users find less invasive than NewsHound's staggered delivery, but which true information aficionados may find too infrequent to satisfy their cravings.

Farcast uses a similar "digest and retrieval" metaphor, but spices up the interaction with its daily database of 5,000 articles by communicating with users through e-mail "droids" — software robots that deliver Farcast's stories to your e-mail address with cheery (for a robot) greetings.

Which one of these services to select comes down to the simple issue of price (see sidebar, page 34). There's also the quality and quantity of news that each service places at your disposal. All three of them cover the "Holy Trinity" (the Associated Press, Business Wire, and PR Wire), but they vary wildly in the additional sources they offer, and it's frequently those less-traditional sources that contain the nuggets of news and opinion that can be used so effectively in the blood sport of "informational one-upsmanship" played around America's corporate water-coolers.

Farcast offers a daily database of 5,000 articles deliverable via e-mail.

Have Your Agent Call My Agent

Every few years, the technology industry embraces a new buzzword and, like a puppy with a sock in its mouth, refuses to let it go. "Multimedia" enjoyed an obnoxiously ubiquitous popularity for almost a decade, until Nicholas Negroponte, the grand vizier of MIT's Media Lab and the father of the term itself, declared the phrase passé.

All The News That's Fit To Browse

Here are a few of the best newspapers and news services that offer passive viewing and/or searchable archives. For a complete listing, browse on over to **http://www.yahoo.com/news**.

Dagbladet

http://www.telepost.no/dagbl@det.no/

Lest we forget how international the Web really is. Totally incomprehensible unless you read Norwegian, but it sure do look purty.

NewsPage

http://www.newspage.com/

Costs $6.90 per month, plus extra fees for what NewsPage calls stories from "pay per view" sources. Caution: Can get expensive. Another service of Individual, Inc., it uses the same sources as HeadsUp, but the stories are archived, searchable, and pre-sorted into industry categories.

NandoNet

http://www.nando.net/

From the folks at the *Raleigh News & Observer*. One look at this, and you'll wonder whether this can really be from the same state that gave us Jesse Helms. The best regional electronic newspaper in the country. These people get it. Top national and local stories, plus *Dick Tracy*, *Brenda Starr*, and *Gasoline Alley*. Don't miss "Pete & Shirley: The Great Tar Heel Novel," a serial in 18 parts written by 17 North Carolina novelists. A variety of free and subscription services.

The New York Times

keyword "times" on America Online

No additional charge beyond regular AOL usage fees. Current day's top stories, plus business and Tuesday "Science Times" section. Searchable book, movie, theater, and restaurant reviews, as well as classifieds.

By the time you read this, the *Times* will have released its new Web edition **(http://www.nytimes.com/)**.

Yahoo

http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/

O.K., so Yahoo has the addresses of just about every Web site on the planet. It also provides newsfeeds from Reuters for free. That's free, as in no cost. It's the best news deal on the Internet.

The cognoscenti are now tossing the word "agent" around like linguistic linguini — every press release from a software company seems to trumpet its product's "agent technology."

Simply put, a software "agent" performs a specific task independently, letting a user move on to other work. (Setting your computer's reminder alarm to ring at a set time is a crude example of agent technology.) But, like those other agents who run up tabs at the Polo Lounge, there's a big difference between an agent who can book you on the "Letterman" show and one who gets you into the chorus of "The Music Man" at a dinner theater in Wyoming. Some agents are just more powerful than others.

Unlike NewsHound and Farcast, which depend on user-generated keywords, Agents, Inc. uses "collaborative filtering" to ensure you won't miss juicy news.

NewsHound, HeadsUp, and Farcast all utilize some form of agent technology to sift through and seek out the stories you want by continually matching their content against your keyword list. HeadsUp uses software algorithms written 20 years ago at Cornell University; the algorithms rank stories by relevancy. For example, if you have asked HeadsUp to send you articles about *hog jowls*, the software agent may decide that if the phrase *hog jowls* is in a story's headline or first paragraph or is mentioned 20 times in the article, it had better send you the story, whereas if *hog jowls* is mentioned once and only once, and is in the last paragraph, it may choose to decline to send the story your way.

A new and even more sophisticated agent technology is just now coming to market. It promises to radically change the way we access information. **Agents, Inc.** is a Boston startup founded by graduates of MIT's Media Lab, where the concepts and code for what Agents, Inc. is calling "collaborative filtering" were first developed.

"One of the difficulties with the news services on the Internet today is that you have to keep adapting them," says Pattie Maes, an associate professor at the Media Lab and one of the founders of Agents, Inc. Services like NewsHound and Farcast, which depend on keyword lists set up by the user, are only as good as the care with which those lists are developed and maintained. You may set up selection criteria based on your current fascination, for example, for *Bosnia* or *global warming*. "But people's interests in news change," notes Maes. If you do not have your agent/filter set to catch stories on *Java*, for example, you might miss something juicy.

Collaborative filtering works by automatically looking at what other users find interesting to help you discover information that you, too, might find intriguing but might not have otherwise encountered. If you like *Beethoven*, for example, a collaborative filtering system might look at what other Beethoven fans are interested in, then make some suggestions about other music you might enjoy. Agents, Inc.'s Web site (**http://www.agents-inc.com**) uses just such a communal music "referral" system to demonstrate its product's logic.

"The community aspect is extremely important in news," says Maes. Finding articles that interest you is easy. Finding the articles that interest everyone else is more difficult, but is critical if what you *really* need to know is what your peers and competitors also know. A news service that's based on the model of a complex, adaptive system might aggregate the reading habits of a cross-section of users with similar interests and begin to select and sort the presentation of information based on collective, rather than individual, interest.

EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT ME!

There is a danger in this reductive process, this self-selection of news, however, and that is the degree to which it shuts out any view of the world that is not our own. With the fragmentation of cable television, the proliferation of magazines that are highly targeted to smaller and smaller demographic groups, and with the

First on the Block: ClariNet

The first and, with more than one million subscribers, the largest electronic newspaper on the Internet is ClariNet (http://www.clarinet.com). Rather than sell its news to individual users, ClariNet markets its service to local Internet access providers, which then make the news available to their members by placing the content in the familiar format of Usenet newsgroups. If your access provider carries ClariNet, launch your Usenet newsgroup reader and look for Usenet newsgroups that begin with the prefix "clari," such as "clari.biz.industry." Sources include the AP, Reuters, SportsTicker, and a variety of syndicated features, including the impeccable advice of Miss Manners, the *Annals of Improbable Research*, the writing of Joe Bob Briggs (drive-in movie critic), and the comic strip *Doonesbury*.

Internet and online services providing even greater opportunities for pursuing individual interests, Americans may be becoming more and more informationally introverted.

Newspapers, especially those of tremendous editorial stature, such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, perform a valuable public service: They give the news an editorial voice. As the editors select the stories that fill the front pages and the editorial sections of their newspapers, they make conscious decisions about the placement of stories and photos, or the size of headlines, based not just on our desire to know, but on our *need* to know as well.

Folding the Paper

The speed and pervasiveness with which the World Wide Web has come to dominate the emerging electronic news business were demonstrated dramatically by the announcement late last year that publishing conglomerate Knight-Ridder was closing its futuristic Information Design Laboratory in Boulder, CO. Abandoning its prototypical development of hand-held, wireless, flat-screen displays that it had envisioned as the "newspaper-of-the-future," Knight-Ridder has decided to focus on its Internet efforts instead.

Industries do not change without misfortunes; eras do not pass without their ironies.

In 1898, the famed Western artist Frederic Remington was sent to Cuba by the powerful Hearst newspaper network to sketch the insurgents fighting for independence from Spain. After growing bored drawing burning sugar-cane fields, Remington cabled home to publisher William Randolph Hearst, "Everything quiet, no trouble here. There will be no war. I wish to return." Hearst wired back: "Please remain. You furnish the pictures and I'll furnish the war."

There may have been no greater name in the newspaper business than William Randolph Hearst.

Through the power of his paper and his own personal influence, it is claimed he single-handedly manipulated America's entrance into the Spanish-American War, and secured Franklin Delano Roosevelt's nomination to the Presidency.

In December 1994, Hearst's grandson, William Randolph Hearst III, announced that he would step down as publisher of the *San Francisco Examiner*, the crown jewel of his grandfather's empire, to join a venture capital firm specializing in new media.

Ink fades; newsprint grows bleached and brittle with age. The news rolls on. ■

Rolling Your Own

Crayon

Jeffrey Ray Boulter admits he's cheap. And lazy. "Getting a subscription to a 'real' newspaper would require me to walk downhill (and then back uphill) everyday to get a paper," he notes. A student at Bucknell University, Jeff has created Crayon, a newspaper you design yourself (**http://www.eg.bucknell.edu/~boulter/crayon**).

After thinking up a clever name for your newspaper, you then click on a series of check boxes that identify the sources you would like to include in your personalized paper. The lengthy list of choices include just about every valuable and foolish free news source available on the Internet, including *TIME* magazine's Daily News Summary, *USA Today*'s Nationline, *The Daily Yomiuri* (Japan), David Letterman's "Top Ten List," "News of the Weird," and "Cool Jargon of the Day."

All of the links pointing to these sites are then compiled for you into a single Web page, which you then save locally on your hard drive. Every morning (or whenever the fancy strikes you), you merely open this local HTML file from within your browser, and presto! — you now have your own personalized newspaper displaying all of your favorite news sources.

PINpaper

BBN Planet in Cambridge, MA, one of the biggest providers of Internet services to corporate America, is releasing a commercial product that uses concepts similar to Crayon (**http://www.pin.bbn.com/**).

Called PINpaper, BBN's offering employs software agents that comb a variety of free and commercial information services and create a customized newsletter specifically tailored to each user's interests. This isn't a news service; it's a publishing system. PINpaper is server-based technology that can search and then reformulate external news — and even internal corporate data — to deliver personalized information to the desktop.

Fishwrap

For three years, freshmen at MIT have relied on Fishwrap, the Cambridge college's own personalized newspaper, to keep them informed of campus events and the world around them. (Why "Fishwrap"? Because, as any crusty newspaper editor will tell you, "Yesterday's news wraps today's fish.")

"Fishwrap" uses a profile of a student's cultural, societal, and even geographic interests (like the hometown she or he left behind) to assemble a personalized paper. The first page of the paper is self-generated by the action of the reader community itself – the ranking and appearance of stories shifts based on the number of people who access each article.

You need to be a registered student at MIT to access the full edition, but a few public pages may be viewed at **http://fishwrap.mit.edu/**. The far more interesting Web page is to be found at **http://fishwrap-docs.www.media.mit.edu/docs/dev/CNGlue/cnglue.html**. There, the founders of Fishwrap — Pascal R. Chesnais, Matthew J. Mucklo, and Jonathan A. Sheena from MIT — have published a paper that exhaustively explains the theories and technologies behind this futuristic publication.

POLITICKING ON THE NET

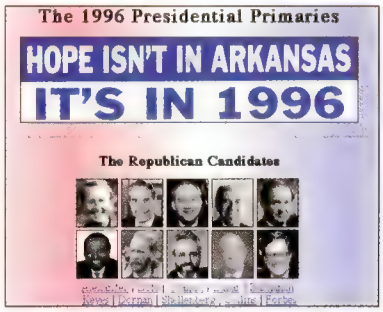
Lauren Guzak

In Presidential election years, March is the month when the freshly thawed lawns of America sprout politicians' yard signs like a bloom of wild mushrooms. And, like mushrooms, it's often difficult to determine the noxiousness of a politician until it's too late.

This year, though, is pregnant with the anticipation of a more informed electorate, as millions of Americans turn to the Internet as their new source of (and venue for expression about) the upcoming November elections. Some experts, like researcher/campaign consultant Daniel Junas, think that the Internet "assembles what's already known more than it pushes the boundaries of information." Others see 1996 as just a preview of what's to come in 2000. Still, a plethora of election-centric Web sites, newsgroups, and discussion forums — from the hyperbolic to the understated — signal widespread approbation of this exploding medium as the ultimate one-stop resource for voters.

ONLINE PRESIDENTIAL PERSONA

So it is that President Clinton has become the first President with a home page — Welcome to the White House at **http://www.whitehouse.gov/**. Still, this classy page lacks anything smacking of campaigning. For the "elect Clinton/Gore in '96" stuff, you have to go to a fan's "unofficial" site — Clinton, Yes! at **http://www.av.qnet.com/~yes/**. It has all the fixins' — lists of his accomplishments, personal history, slams of Clinton's opponents, etc.



Republicans' Web Central is a place to get the lowdown on GOP Presidential politics.

And Clinton's many political opponents, who traditionally shopped for voters via print, television, and radio, are now also hiring consultants like the firm of Jamie Langius and Associates (**http://www.berkeleyic.com:80/consulo/**) to handle their online personas. All the major Presidential campaigns have established sites on the Web, replete with press releases, news clips, position papers, and opportunities for direct participation (see below for a list of candidates' sites). And some of those who have taken rain checks, like former Vice President Dan

Compare and contrast: On top is the Unofficial Bob Dole site, in the middle is the Official Dole Page, on the bottom is the Anti-Official Dole site.

Official Presidential Campaign Sites

REPUBLICAN
(see the RNC site at http://www.rnc.org/)

- **Alan Keyes Network Home Page**
  http://www.keyes.gocin.com/
- **Alexander for President — Come on Along!**
  http://www.Nashville.Net/~lamar/
- **Buchanan for President Home Page**
  http://www.buchanan.org/index.shtml
- **Charles E. Collins for President**
  http://computek.net/public/collins/collins.html
- **Lugar for President 1996 — Home Page**
  http://www.iquest.net/lugar/lugar.htm
- **Official Dole for President WWW Site**
  http://www.dole96.com/
- **Steve Forbes for President**
  http://www.forbes96.com/
- **Taylor for President Home Page**
  http://www.webcom.com/morry96/

DEMOCRATIC
(see the Democratic National Committee site at http://www.democrats.org/):

- **Daniels for President**
  http://www.daniels.winnipeg.mb.ca/
- **LaRouche Exploratory Committee**
  http://www.clark.net/larouche/welcome.html
- **PAT PAULSEN FOR PRESIDENT**
  http://www.amdest.com/Pat/pat.html
- **Welcome to the White House**
  http://www.whitehouse.gov/

THIRD-PARTY CANDIDATES

- **American Conservative Party**
  http://www.homeless.com/homepages/wild0003@gold.tc.umn.edu.html
- **B/CS Presidential Campaign Tour & Opinion Page**
  http://www.ipt.com/vote/
- **Communist Party U.S.A.**
  http://www.tiac.net/users/brownh/cp-usa/cp-usa.html
- **Douglass J. Ohmen (Libertarian)**
  http://www.vote-smart.org/campaign_96/presidential/libertar/ohmen.html
- **Dr. John Hagelin for President, 1996**
  http://www.hagelin.org/hagelin/
- **Grassroots Party**
  http://www.winternet.com/~grp/
- **Harry Browne (Libertarian)**
  http://www.rahul.net/browne/
- **Harry Browne for President**
  http://www.HarryBrowne96.org/
- **Irwin Schiff (Libertarian)**
  http://www.vote-smart.org/campaign_96/presidential/libertar/schiff.html
- **Libertarian Party**
  http://www.lp.org/lp/lp.html
- **Patriot Party**
  http://www.epix.net/~dschultz/patriot1.html
- **Ralph Nader — Green Parties of North America**
  http://www.rahul.net/greens/
- **Rick Tompkins (Libertarian)**
  http://www.nguworld.com/rick96/
- **Socialist Party USA Cybercenter**
  http://sunsite.unc.edu/spc/index.html
- **The Natural Law Party Home Page**
  http://www.fairfield.com/nlp/
- **United We Stand America (Ross Perot)**
  http://www.uwsa.org/
- **U.S. Taxpayers Party**
  http://www.mindspring.com/~rcdavis/ustp/ustp-home.html
- **World Wide Libertarian Pages**
  http://www.libertarian.com/wwlp/

Quayle (**http://a1.com/ice/quayle/index.html**), have nonetheless taken up residence on the Web, perhaps biding time for some future bid for high office.

Even the out-on-the-fringe Democratic candidates have established Web sites. These include pseudo-economist Lyndon LaRouche (**http://www.clark.net/larouche/welcome.html**), the I'm-not-afraid-to-call-myself-a-liberal's liberal Bruce Daniels (**http://www.daniels.winnipeg.mb.ca/**), and humorist Pat Paulsen (**http://www.amdest.com/Pat/pat.html**), who has been running for the Presidency in every election since 1968.

Little-known Communist Party candidate for President Bruce Daniels has a spiffy Web site.

The campaign sites are using surveys and Web logging tools, like those being developed by Nielsen Interactive Services (**http://www.nielsenmedia.com/**), for political marketing. These tools have the added benefit of making people feel that their opinions are being accounted for.

Webmasters and mistresses are in high demand as politicians, think tanks, and special interest organizations look to concoct a slice of online perfection — a little something to win over the hearts and minds of the millions of potential voters who might happen by.

As Robert Feldtman of the Republican's Web Central site (**http://republicans.vt.com/**) rhetorically asks: "Who is more likely to vote? The homeless bum on the corner, or a computer owner with a job?"

Our elected officials and their wannabe counterparts obviously think the same.

WHO'S FOR REAL?

The enormity of the Web and the relative ease of creating Web sites make posting a candidacy online problematic. Teeming with unofficial sites from the serious to the roasting, the Web challenges the casual passerby to locate the certifiably authentic home page of a specific candidate. Just running a general query in Lycos (**http://www.lycos.com**) using the key words "Phil Gramm for President," for instance, will get you a few pages worth of sites to weed through.

At one point early on in the Presidential race, people who went to the Web in search of a site for the Republican front-runner, Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, could only find unofficial sites.

Two sites — the pro-Dole Unofficial Bob Dole Home Page (**http://homepage.seas.upenn.edu/~lapple/dole/bob.html**) and the decidedly anti-Dole Bob Dole for President (**http://www.dole96.org/**) — were both up and running before the Kansas Senator's own version. To make sure that people knew which site had Dole's personal seal of approval, the campaign titled its own the Official Dole for President WWW Site (**http://www.dole96.com/**).

At this official site, Dole enthusiasts can get free bumper stickers and download screen savers, wallpapers, and desktop patterns (your choice of a photo assortment, or of Dole's schnauzer, Leader). There's also a nifty utility that lets you personalize a Dole postcard, then send it to a friend.

Though the pack of high-profile Republican candidates lag far behind Dole in the current polls, they remain largely undeterred at the time of this writing, and are prime subjects for Web pages created by supporters and naysayers alike.

To help determine what's real and what isn't, your best resources are those sites that serve as election guides. Two of the most useful are Project Vote Smart (**http://www.vote-smart.org/**) and Campaign '96 (**http://pathfinder.com/@@fHFgF2FxFwIAQKRi/pathfinder/politics/1996/index.html**), both of which include candidates' bios and plenty of links to get you started and keep you busy.

Another good resource is the Countdown '96 Home Page (**http://www.comeback.com/countdown/**).

If non-partisanship isn't your thing, try the Information Headquarters for the Republican Primary (**http://www.umr.edu/~sears/primary/main.html**), or A Democrat's Source Page (**http://www.wp.com/lookn2it/home.html**).

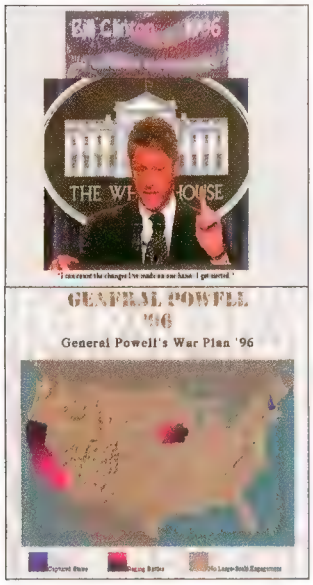
Unofficial sites

Alan Keyes Network Home Page
http://sandh.com/keyes/index.html

- **Bill Clinton — President '96**
  http://www.clinton96.org/
- **Bob Dole for President**
  http://www.dole96.org/
- **Buchanan For President!**
  http://www.buchanan96.org/
- **Clinton, Yes!**
  http://www.av.qnet.com/~yes/
- **Dan Quayle For President!**
  http://www.quayle96.org/
- **Dole Watch**
  http://users.aol.com/dolewatch1/private/page1.htm
- **General Colin Powell's Strategy to Defeat the Enemy**
  http://www.powell96.org/
- **GrammNet**
  http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~awg36840/grammnet.html
- **Peter Wilson For President**
  http://www.wilson96.org/
- **Phil Gramm for President Home Page**
  http://sba_server.sba.oakland.edu/staff/djsussma/wpg/wpghome.htm
- **Powell for President!**
  http://faraday.ee.unf.edu/~jperez/politics/powell/
- **Rush in '96!**
  http://www.rush96.org/
- **The Unofficial Bob Dole Home Page**
  http://homepage.seas.upenn.edu/~lapple/bobdole.nscape.html

Slam Sites

Another phenomenon of Presidential-related Webomania: the slam site. Even those Republicans whose candidacies have been nothing more than mere speculation have been the subject of some serious razzing. Take the case of



Two of the funnier slam-the-candidates sites are the General Colin Powell '96 and the Bill Clinton — President '96 pages.

the former hope of the Republican party, General Colin Powell. This popular figure is skewered at the General Colin Powell '96 site (**http://www.powell96.org/**), which includes a strategic war map for his takeover of the country. In fact, the creators of the Powell site are single-handedly responsible for a suite of farcical slam-sites that includes Buchanan For President! (**http://www.buchanan96.org/**), The Republican Central Committee (**http://www.republicans.org/**), and Dan Quayle For President! (**http://www.quayle96.org/**), Bill Clinton — President '96 (**http://www.clinton96.org/**), among others. These sites are less substance than satire, and there can be some serious panning. Such is the case with the Buchanan site, where the photograph of the ultra-conservative host of "Crossfire" is placed in an Americana graphic, itself laid atop a backdrop of quilted swastika wallpaper.

Third Parties

Ross Perot, Colin Powell, and Bill Bradley may be heralded as possible third-party candidates, but they don't offer a real divergence from the Republicans and Democrats. Ersatz third parties, which do, have also staked out territory on the Web, having finally found a medium that offers a more — but by no means completely — level playing ground. Parties of substance include the Communists (**http://www.tiac.net/users/brownh/cp-usa/cp-usa.html**), Greens (**http://www.rahul.net/greens/**), Socialists (**http://sunsite.unc.edu/spc/index.html**), and Libertarians (**http://www.lp.org/lp/lp.html**). The party to keep an eye on this year is the Greens, with its star-consumer-advocate-turned-presidential candidate, Ralph Nader.

First Primaries

Winter's just barely over, yet America is already fixated on next November. March not only ushers in Spring, but a slew of primaries. So, get online and watch as the race for the presidency unfolds before you, on your computer. ■

Pros and Cons of a Web-Based Democracy

Technological advances in communication are set to transform institutions and models of public participation in government. The White House has been active in projects to develop wide-area public collaboration systems, like that used in Vice President Al Gore's Electronic Open Meeting on the National Performance Review (**http://www.npr.gov/OpenMeet/openmeet.html**). The experimental system supported a large online meeting; more than 4,000 people participated in policy planning. They discussed, evaluated, and critiqued recommendations by linking their comments to points in the evolving policy hypertext.

But despite the rosy optimism that the net can serve as a means to create a more vocal and participatory constituency, a debate is raging over the fact that online access is still very much based on class, education, race, and gender. The Center for Democracy and Technology (**http://www.cdt.org**), which says it is committed to "develop and advocate public policies that advance constitutional civil liberties and democratic values in new computer and communications technologies," is at the forefront of this debate, which is attempting to explore ways in which this nascent technology will/should/could affect our current democratic institutions.

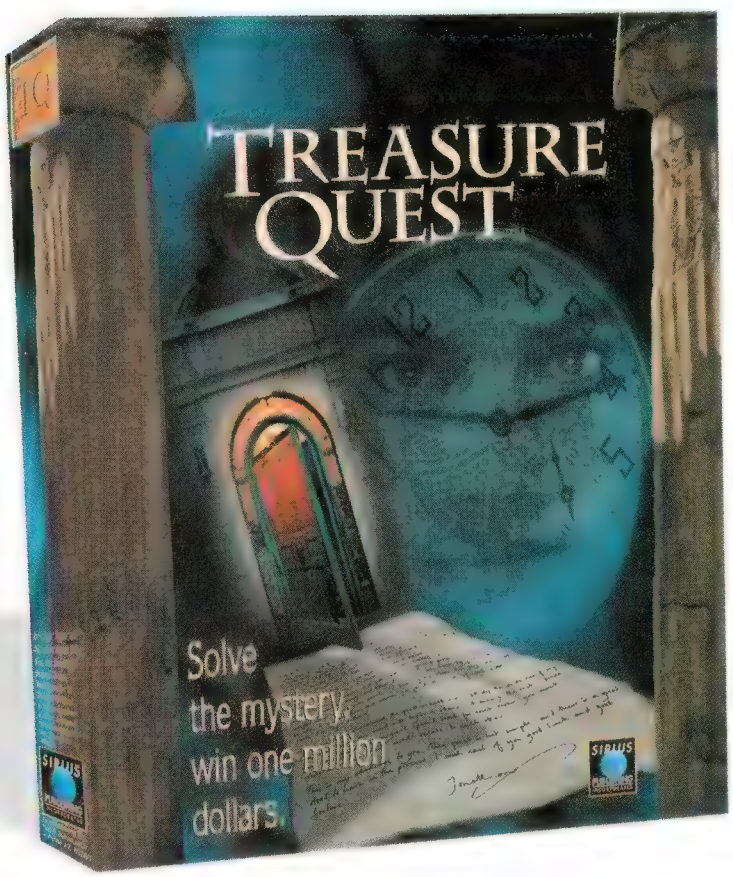
At the Political Participation Project site (**http://www.ai.mit.edu/projects/ppp/home.html**), you can find a recent report from the U.S. Department of Commerce called "FALLING THROUGH THE NET: A Survey of the 'Have Nots' in Rural and Urban America." In it, the government reaffirms its goal of creating universal access to the basic starting point: telephone lines. But, the report concludes, "while a standard telephone line can be an individual's pathway to the riches of the Information Age, a personal computer and modem are rapidly becoming the keys to the vault." And, as the Commerce Department admits that it doesn't even have a clear idea of telephone line saturation, America is a long way from universal access to the resources of the Internet.

Federal Government Information

- **Federal Web Locator**
  http://www.law.vill.edu/fed-agency/fedwebloc.html
- **Government Printing Office**
  http://www.access.gpo.gov
- **House and Senate Legislative Information**
  http://thomas.loc.gov
- **House of Representatives**
  http://www.house.gov
- **Library of Congress Legislative Information**
  http://thomas.loc.gov
- **Senate Gopher Server**
  gopher://gopher.senate.gov/11/
- **The White House**
  http://www.whitehouse.gov
- **THOMAS: Legislative Information on the Internet**
  http://thomas.loc.gov/
- **United States Senate**
  http://www.senate.gov

I hereby give and bequeath to you my entire fortune in the sum of One Million Dollars ($1,000,000). To receive this inheritance, however, it is necessary for you to solve the mystery I've left behind.

SOLVE THE MYSTERY, WIN ONE MILLION DOLLARS.



A wealthy professor has died, leaving his million-dollar estate, and a magnificently compelling and complex mystery called Treasure Quest™. Search the professor's rambling 10 room mansion to discover clues that are hidden in every nook and cranny. Terry Farrell, star of TV's Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, will guide you in your quest. SiriusNet™ software lets you sign onto the Internet with competitive access rates. Check out the TQ Home Page, surf the Net and share ideas with other TQ seekers. An audio CD of the original soundtrack is included which may offer important hints. Take the Treasure Quest challenge. Find the clues. Solve the mystery. And win one million dollars.

http: \\www.treasurequest.com

Look for Treasure Quest at your favorite computer software retailer
March 22, 1996, 12:14 a.m.

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Void where prohibited or restricted. Rules and restrictions apply.
See participating stores for details. Contest ends when prize is claimed or no later than 12-31-99.

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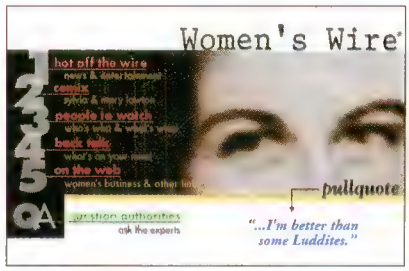
NETWORKING ONLINE

Aliza Sherman



Women's Wire (http://www.women.com) links you to lots of other women's sites.

One of the first uses of the Internet was for computer scientists and engineers to network with one another. In the past 20 years, the networking possibilities the net offers have exploded, as the number of wired people has grown at a phenomenal rate. Today, there are loads of different kinds of people — everyone from calligraphers, lawyers, and doctors, to motorcycle fanatics, grad students, and job seekers — networking online. With online forums about everything from motherhood or fathering to gardening, fashion, sports, money management, soap operas, cooking, health, travel, music, family, sewing, and feminism, the net lets people seek advice, find support, and gain a sense of community with others of similar interests around the world. It also enables people far away from one another to transport large files of all kinds, things a fax machine could never handle and that even overnight delivery can't beat. Moreover, e-mail beats the postal service hands down for speedy and reliable delivery.

In offering up an example of how people are networking with each other, we decided to focus on a group of people considered by many to still be a minority on the net — women.

The TAP site (http://www.cs.yale.edu/homes/tap/tap.html) is great for networking.

Women have met online and then gathered in cities around the world for face-to-face social and professional meetings. Some of the women who've worked hard to network with other women on the net have, in the process, created valuable resources to help encourage online activity (see sidebar, page 43). Women networking with other women online have, in the process, received advice for problems in personal relationships, shared the birth of a child with women from around the world, discovered lost friends from school, and found jobs online. They've also met women who live across town or across the globe, and discovered how to grow better tomatoes. Women in remote areas have found other women for conversation, and to exchange information and research or share resources.

Overall, women are going online to communicate in new ways, to do research quickly, to make contacts around the world, to be entertained, to self-publish and to be heard. Women are discovering how the Internet and World Wide Web can truly enhance their lives, both personally and professionally, and they are reaping the benefits from getting online.

Among the women networking pioneers of the net are:

Nancy Rhine, founder of the now-defunct BBS Women's Wire. Currently, she's director of Women's Programming for America Online and GNN. A single mother of three daughters, she's a true visionary about building virtual women's communities.

Barbara Ann O'Leary, a feminist activist, has created Virtual Sisterhood, a global women's electronic support network (**http://www.igc.apc.org/vsister/**) that includes the vs-online-strat mailing list and the Virtual Sisterhood's WWW Development project. The latter brings volunteers together with women's organizations that would like to have a Web presence.

Stephanie Brail, a freelance writer, is an entrepreneur who owns a computer training and

Five Ways to Network:

1. Get on a mail list. There are thousands of mail lists, and they offer the quickest way to build strong relationships among people with similar interests. People on mail lists very quickly form communities, even around the driest of topics. To get a list of most major mail lists, send mail to **listserv@brownvm.brown.edu** or **listserv@bitnic.educom.edu**. In the text body, type: list global.

2. Get access to Usenet newsgroups. Like mail lists, newsgroups provide an easy way to quickly find people who share your interests. There are more than 10,000 newsgroups, so it's very likely that there are others who share your passion. Two good Web-based search engines that can help you find newsgroups are at **http://sunsite.unc.edu/usenet-i/** and **http://www.cen.uiuc.edu/cgi-bin/find-news**. Also, there are several Yellow Page directory books with Usenet listings, and most service providers offer members a list.

3. Use major Web search engines such as Lycos or Yahoo! to find other people who have built home pages that complement your interests. If you like a page you've found, link it from your own home page and ask the creators if they might consider linking you. Usually, people are happy to oblige, though sometimes it may take them a while to actually update their site. Many people don't have direct access to their Web servers, and need considerable time sending files around.

4. Follow the links on a Web page you like, and if you like the pages you find, ask *those* creators if they might consider linking your page, and so on and so on. Tracing through links is probably the best way to network using the World Wide Web.

5. Find a local computer users' organization. Often, many people with diverse interest who may not find each other via standard e-mail, Usenet, and the Web, will often find other common interests in these local organizations. It's also a chance to take some of these digital relationships and bring them into the physical world.

The work of Malika Agueznay of Morocco is among the offerings on the World's Women On-Line site.

consulting practice. She's also the creator of the Spiderwoman mailing list for women Web designers (send e-mail to **majordomo@lists.primenet.com** with the message: subscribe spiderwoman).

Eva Shaderowfsky, a photographer and writer who was stricken with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) in 1991, went online when her life as an artist was shattered by her illness. After seeking support for CFS and finding nothing, she formed a CFS support group on America Online and went on to host weekly women's live real-time conferences online.

Joan Korenman, a professor and director of Women's Studies at University of Maryland Baltimore County, created WMST-L, an e-mail list for Women's Studies teaching, research, and program administration. It boasts more than 4,000 subscribers in 39 countries. (To subscribe, send an e-mail to **listserv@umdd.umd.edu**, with "subscribe WMST-L" and your name in the message.)

Women Online: They're Not Shopping!

According to Interactive Publishing Alert's 1995 Survey of Women Online **(http://www.netcreations.com/ipa/women.htm)**, which polled more than 300 women online, women who go online put "communications" at the top of their agendas. Shopping ranks dead last. When asked to name the online features they used the most, 237 respondents picked swapping e-mail with friends and family; 214 respondents named special-interest bulletin boards.

The early findings of a new report surveying 2,000 women — "CG Internet Media's Profiles of Women Online" — echoes IPA's findings. It shows that 33 percent of the women surveyed on the Web said their main reason for going online was for research. Thirty percent cited e-mail, while a mere one percent attributed their online time to shopping.

The CGIM study also found that approximately 62 percent of the women it surveyed are between the ages of 18-35; 64 percent have either some college background or a bachelor's degree; and 34 percent make between $20,000-$40,000 annually. Forty-seven percent of them said they'd been online for less than one year, and many who answered the survey wrote in that they had been online for less than a month.

Womenslink (http://www.womenslink.com) has created a cyber "women's club," complete with online library, spa, cafe, and wellness center.

Networking With Other Women Online

TAP: The Ada Project
http://www.cs.yale.edu/homes/tap/tap.html
Designed to help women "tap" into Internet resources, TAP has everything from computer science fellowship and grant info to lists of conferences, organizations, discussion groups, and more. A good starting place.

The World's Women On-Line
http://wwol.inre.asu.edu/intro.html
The site serves as an electronic art networking project that seeks to use the Internet as a "global exhibition" for women's experience and culture. Various women artists from around the world are represented, along with GIFs of their work.

Virtual Sisterhood
http://www.igc.apc.org/vsister/
A wonderful example of grassroots organizing on an international level, Virtual Sisterhood offers free Web space and Web page creation to small women's organizations all around the world.

Web-sters' Net-Work
http://lucien.sims.berkeley.EDU/women_in_it.html
Connect with other women in the fields of library, information, and computer science.

Webgrrls
http://www.webgrrls.com
A "real-world" networking group for women in new media, or interested in it. There are chapters in the U.S., Canada, the U.K., and Australia.

Women and Computer Science
http://www.ai.mit.edu/people/ellens/gender.html
There's a great collection of links to women and computing sites, plus a wide assortment of essays, speeches, and articles about women and computing.

WomensNet (at IGC)
http://www.igc.apc.org/womensnet/
Here's a network that's been created to help women activists and women's nonprofit organizations share information. WomensNet provides e-mail accounts, net access, and Web publishing help to its members.

Women's Web
http://www.womweb.com
This site was conceived as an online community for women (and men) who want to "learn more about women in business and about women's issues and their lives." Interactivity is a key tenet here, so there's lots of opportunities to participate.

Women's WebWorld
http://www.feminist.org
This site, which brings the Feminist Majority online, has an "Urgent Action" section that helps you get involved in political activities, job postings, a university network, and a good news and events section.

Women's Wire
http://www.women.com
This online magazine for women links you to lots of other women's Web sites, including women's businesses, upcoming events, parenting resources, and much more. Besides that, it has lots of woman-related news, people watching, and a good "back talk" section that lets you e-mail the site creators with "what's on your mind."

Womenslink
http://www.womenslink.com
It's a library, a cafe, a wellness center, and a spa — all in one. The motto of this site, which was put together by Bristol-Myers Squibb (maker of Clairol® among other products), is: "Cyberspace isn't a men's club anymore." Check out the very good Resource Center, which has information for working moms.

Internet Mailing Lists:
cyber-sisters (for women artists and writers):
Send e-mail to **majordomo@cgim.com**, with the message: subscribe cyber-sisters.

internet-women-help (general assistance for women online):
Send e-mail to **majordomo@lists.best.com**, with the message: subscribe internet-women-help.

vs-online-strat (feminist activism):
Send e-mail to **majordomo@igc.apc.org**, with the message: subscribe vs-online-strat

spiderwoman (Web designers):
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Buying CDs Online

Wayne Cunningham

Everybody likes music. Whenever I'm mingling at a party, after the inevitable "So, what do you do?" question has been tapped out for all its conversational worth, the next topic is almost always music. If the topic turns to politics, half the time the conversation is over because I wind up thinking, "Why am I talking to this idiot?" But with music as the conversational topic, I'm much less likely to conclude that I have absolutely nothing in common with someone if he or she likes a music genre that I don't. Sure, I might lose some respect for country and western fans, but it certainly wouldn't kill the conversation.

The Ultimate Band List attempts to catalog every fan site on the Internet.

This common love for music has found its way on to the Internet in a big way. Forget pornography. Forget the Mac vs. PC debate. Music resources and information probably take up more bandwidth than either. Not only are there all sorts of information on your favorite bands, there's quite a lot out there that exposes you to new music you might never have heard of. There are more than 200 alt.music newsgroups on Usenet, and it would be impossible to count all the Web sites that have some kind of music connection.

O.K., time for an anecdote. I was having breakfast at my favorite cafe, and one of the java jockeys had put on some eclectic mix tape. A song came on that I really liked, but all I knew about it was that it had the refrain, "26 miles across the sea, Santa Catalina is the place for me." I went to the online CD stores with the best search engines and searched on Catalina, and Santa Catalina, but came up with nothing. Then I went to the WebCrawler search engine (**http://www.webcrawler.com**) and tried Catalina as the keyword. I ended up with the information Web site for Catalina Island (**http://www.catalina.com/index.html**), off the coast of Southern California, and at the top of the page found a couple of lines from the song, but no further information. I then e-mailed the editor of the island's local newspaper, who provided me with the actual title, "26 miles," and the artists, The Four Freshmen.

The Internet All-Music Guide has a huge collection of record reviews.

Probably the best general source for information on recorded music is the Internet All-Music Guide (**http://allmusic.com/AMG**). It's a collection of reviews by more than 200 freelance music journalists, and probably the largest collection of record reviews

The Value of Buying CDs Online

	CDNow!	Music Boulevard	1-800 Music Now	i?music/media	CDWorld
	http://www.cdnow.com	http://www.musicblvd.com	http://www.1800musicnow.mci.com	http://www.icw.com/cd/imm1.html	http://cdworld.com
Alanis Morissette *Jagged Little Pill*	$15.36	$13.49	$13.99	$15.97	$13.77
Faith Hill *It Matters To Me*	$14.96	$13.49	$14.99	N/A	$13.77
Mariah Carey *Daydream*	$13.96	$12.96	$12.99	N/A	$13.77
John Tesh *Sax on the Beach*	$14.77	$11.99	$15.99	$13.97	$12.77
Fugazi *13 Songs*	$ 9.97	$ 8.49	$10.99	$ 9.97	$ 7.77
Cats: *Selections from the Original Broadway Cast Recording*	$15.36	$13.99	$16.99	$16.97	$13.77
Beethoven *Sonatas:Pathetique, Moonlight, Appassionata* Pianist: Daniel Barenboim	$10.97	$12.99	N/A	$ 9.97	$ 8.77
Shipping:	$ 4.94	$ 5.99	$ 5.14	$ 4.95	$ 6.75
Total:	**$101.29**	**$93.39**	**$91.08**	**$71.80**	**$91.14**

This chart compares the value you'll find at the major online record stores. All of these stores have online ordering, and delivery in two to four days. The music was chosen for comparison and selection purposes only; *The Net* does not endorse or encourage readers to listen to any of these recordings, especially not John Tesh. Music stores that came up with an "N/A" for any recording obviously have a poor selection. The online ordering and search capabilities were good for every store except i?music/media. We personally think the best two stores are Music Boulevard and CDWorld.

in the world. It started as an FTP site, in the pre-Web days, and now exists in a nicely designed HTML format. The online music store CDNow! (**http://cdnow.com/**) provides it with the server space, but other than links to the CDNow! listings, the All-Music Guide is completely independent.

One of the most comprehensive sites, with local and linked resources for information about all sorts of music, is Music Resources (**http://www.siba.fi/Kulttuuripalvelut/music.html**). This site is supported by the Finnish Sibelius Academy of Music. Just about every music resource on the Internet is linked here, including music libraries and composer biographies.

If it's popular music you're interested in, then take a look at the Ultimate Band List (**http://american.recordings.com/wwwofmusic/ubl/ubl.shtml**). The folks at the American Recordings label have put this site together in an attempt to catalog every fan site on the Internet. If you have a fan site, this would be a place to get it listed. Personally, I like surf music, so my favorite resource is Surf's Up (**http://www.cygnus.com/misc/kfjc/surf/**), a site by disc jockey Phil Dirt. Before you order any music online, though, take a peek at our value comparison chart on online music stores (page 45). Remember — every penny you save can be plowed back into online cruising time. ■

AND THE BEAT GOES ON...

Tina Blaine

The explosion of musical resources online is rapidly creating a dynamic means for networking opportunities between and among musicians and the music industry. On the net, you'll find a cross-hybridization of services for those in the indie/alternative music business, those in the business of making music, and those who simply want to enjoy music. There's unlimited accessibility for signed and unsigned artists, as well as independent and major record labels. You'll also find previews of new releases, club listings, booking and touring info, fanzines, books, software, instruments, new products, reviews, online chats, and more — everything is possible with a click of your Web browser.

Here I'll give you some ideas on where to go, how to get there, and what to do when you finally make it to Nirvana (**http://www.vol.it/NIRVANA/sitiwww.html**).

READY TO ROCK AND ROLL?

The most obvious way to start out would be to point your Web browser to **http://www.yahoo.com/Entertainment/Music/** to do a net search. You'll find links to artists, movie soundtracks, marching bands, grunge, or karaoke. If you already know what you're looking for, you may want to be a bit more specific in your search and type in a band name, an instrument, or a genre of music. WILMA — the Worldwide Internet Live Music Archive — maintains venue listings, tour directories, and concert reviews (**http://underground.net/wilma/index.html**).

For a trip back to the psychedelic 60s, check out the revolution in rock poster art at **http://www.artrock.com/**, or visit all your favorite dinosaurs on the Ultimate Band List at the Web Wide World of Music **http://american.recordings.com/WWWoM**.

The University of Indiana Music Library maintains an extensive list of academic and non-academic resources on the Internet at **http://www.music.indiana.edu/misc/nonacademic.html**. I spent hours cross-referencing Bhangra music (**http://yucc.yorku.ca/home/sanraj/bhangra.html**) with the music of Brazil, the Caribbean, and Africa (**http://www.matisse.net/~jplanet/afmx/ahome.htm**).

Eventually, I found myself transported to India (**http://www.math.fsu.edu:80/~tchawla/Punjab/culture.html**), then to Zimbabwe via Portland and Seattle (**http://www.teleport.com/~dbullock/shona_music.shtml**).

I was also sidetracked along the way by links to the Drums and Percussion Pages (**http://www.cse.ogi.edu/Drum/**), newsgroups, mailing lists, and the Global Music Outlet (**http://www iuma.com/GMO/africa.html**). And don't miss the reviews on the underground music scene in the U.K. at **http://yucc.yorku.ca/home/sanraj/links.html**.

More Places to Hear Cool SOUNDZ...

Aussie Music Online
http://www.aussiemusic.com.au/

CDNow!
http://cdnow.com/

Internet Underground Music Archive
http://uk.iuma.com/IUMA/index_text.html

Online Jukebox
Will Play Back Without Requiring Downloading
http://www.interjuke.com.

Rock around the World
http://www.ratw.com/low/ratw.htm

The Cry of the Aardvark
http://www.ucsalf.ac.uk/pa/soundp/snds_etc/wel_comp.wav

Tons of Tee Vee Theme Tunes
http://www.parkhere.com/tvbytes/

What's Cooking in the Music Kitchen
http://www.nando.net/music/gm/

Getting Wired for Sound

If you're ready to hear what's out there on the net, you'll need to install a few freeware or shareware ($15 or less) helper applications to get going. Some of the most common audio files you'll find in cyberia are ULAW (a.k.a. AU; they're used by Unix machines), AIFF (for Macs), WAV (for Windows), and MPEG (for Windows, Mac, and Unix) .

If you're on a Mac, SoundMachine will play and record AIFF and ULAW sounds. If the site you've chosen has WAV or MPEG files, you'll want to download SoundApp (which plays back AIFF, WAV, and AU), and the MPEG audio app (.mp2), not to be confused with MPEG video. To download SoundMachine, SoundApp, MPEG audio, and numerous other freebies, log into **http://wwwhost.ots.utexas.edu/mac/pub-mac-sound.html**. For those cruising on a PC machine, drive by **http://www.cdlink.com/download.html#1Internet Free** to download a copy of WHAM for Microsoft Windows (AIF, AU, and WAV), WPLNY (W-play-any AU, VOC, WAV, SND, and AIFF), or Cool Edit, which plays back just about everything. You can also download MPEG sound players for Windows, Macintosh, and Unix platforms at **http://soundwire.com/mp2players.html**.

There's More...

If that's not enough to make your head swim, RealAudio, CDLink, and Xing Technology's Streamworks are also making some headway in the digital audio world. RealAudio's home page, at **http://www.realaudio.com**, harbors sound bytes, servers, and encoders for Macs and Windows. At CDLink **(http://www.cdlink.com/)**, you'll find a TrueSpeech player for Windows with a Mac player soon to come. Another proprietary CDLink application for Mac and Windows is available from Voyager at **http://www.voyagerco.com/cdlink**. You can also download the StreamWorks audio/video server (for Windows and Unix platforms; audio only for Macs) at **http://204.62.160.251/streams/index.html**.

Buy Buy Bye

With the commercial availability of recordable CD players, we will soon be able to download music directly from the artists and bypass the distribution network altogether.

Until then, Sound Wire **(http:// soundwire.com)**, CD World Discount Store **(http://CDWorld.com/)**, and the InTouch Group **(http://www.worldwidemusic.com/)** are just a few of the online services that offer thousands of downloadable sound samples and CDs. The Music Exchange **(http://www.scsn.net/~musex/)** claims to be the best way to buy, sell, or trade anything musical. Also check out the Guitar Pages **(http://comp.uark.edu/~cbray/html/guitar.html)** to trade rhythms, tunings, and techniques. Real-time net jams provide a way for musicians all over the world to share ideas and mutual inspiration. To join the Res Rocket Surfers' virtual band, try logging into **http://www.southern.com/RRS/buttons.html**. You can also start swapping MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) files with other interested cybernauts. The Mammoth Music Meta-List **(http://pathfinder.com/@@JgN540EN9AIAQANi/vibe/mmm/music.html)** offers an extensive list of festivals, FAQs, and an experiment in collective improvisational songwriting called Sound Threads. Believe it or not, even the Department of Defense is sponsoring a collaborative World Band effort at **http://conect.bbn.com/WorldBand/Pages/WorldBand.html**. Music on the Internet could be our best hope for world peace. ■

Tech talk

MIDI Farm
http://www.midifarm.com/
Everything you ever wanted to know about MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) til the cows come home — MIDI software, hardware, keyboards, digital audio hardware, and software, plus music retailers, organizations, and free MIDI files.

- **SoundWave**
  http://soundwave.com/
  How the professional audio industry discovered the Internet, complete with Save The Earth signed rock posters.
- **The Musician's Web**
  http://valley.interact.nl/AV/MUSWEB/home.html
  Offers listings of companies and products.
- **The Synth Zone**
  http://www.rain.org/~nigelsp/index.html
  An attempt to ease the search for synth resources on the Internet.

Service in Tune

- **Mammoth Meta-Music Services**
  http://pathfinder.com/@@QiExMJEYowMAQL9i/vibe/mmm/music_others.htm
  We're talking HUGE listings...
- **Music World III**
  http://www.mw3.com/
  Has information about instruments, music books, music software, Internet music news, and music companies.
- **SonicNet**
  http://www.ingress.com/ims/sonicnet/index.html
  Offers information from magazines and fanzines, independent record labels and bands, clubs, booking agents, and live online conferences. Cost is $10/month — which includes e-mail and unlimited online time, music advice from producers and lawyers, and information about death metal, dance, trance, hardcore and pop.
- **University of Oregon School of Music Information Server**
  http://music1.uoregon.edu/musres.html
  You don't have to be a student to take advantage of this one.
- **Worldwide Internet Live Music Archive (WILMA)**
  http://underground.net/wilma/index.html
  Maintains venue listings, tour directories, and concert reviews that are updated weekly.

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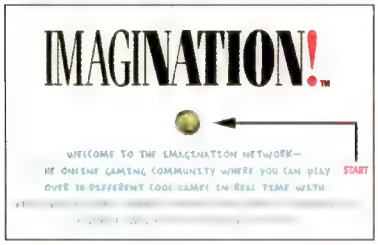
Play by Play: Overview of Online Gaming

Crystal Waters with Trent Ward

The phrase "online gaming" has become as vague and all-encompassing as that mystery term "multimedia." Online gaming started with text-based role playing games, along the lines of Dungeons and Dragons, either in a real-time chat room or via messaging. And now, it's used to describe online services whose interfaces allow two or more people to engage in multi-player board or card games, such as chess or bridge. It also describes services that let members play networkable games, such as Doom, against a multitude of other members via their Internet server. We're also seeing an increasing number of Web-based games (see sidebar).



Hop over to the ImagiNation site for pricing information and free software.

Here's a taste of online services dedicated to gaming, and services with online gaming options. We've also thrown in some resources that will keep you up-to-date with this growing field, and maybe even find you a cheat or two. Whether you want to play bridge or blow one up, there's plenty to choose from.

ImaginNation Network

http://www.inngames.com/

One of the best places to start looking for online fun is AT&T's ImaginNation Network, a system designed for nothing but multi-player gaming. All you need to do to get the software is call 800 IMAGIN 1, or download the software from **http://www.inngames.com/** (Windows only). At press time, the company was offering 10 free hours for potential users to try out the network. Once you've got all of the software in front of you and have loaded it up on your PC, you'll be confronted with an easy-to-use interface that helps you create an online persona.

After you've logged onto the network, you'll see a landscape map of the ImagiNation cyberland. Several different sublands are shown (like Casinoland, Clubhouse, Post Office, and Medievaland). Clicking on any one of these areas will take you into new places, each with their own flavor, rules of conduct, and games. The Clubhouse is the best place to get started, since it has hosts who are glad to answer any questions you may have about how to enter certain areas, where to find technical support, and why everyone is picking on your choice of character portraits. Games in the Clubhouse area include a variety of parlor games, like Chess, Checkers, Hearts, and Go.

If you're interested in huge, multi-player role-playing games, Medievaland is the place to go. Casinoland has gambling games like Poker, Roulette, and Blackjack, and the Arena offers myriad action and strategy games, like Red Baron, Front Page Sports Football, and Miniature Golf.

The Entertainment Network gives you access to other multi-players through its server.

Total Entertainment Network

http://www.ten.net/

A newcomer on the online playing field is the Total Entertainment Network, or TEN. It's geared toward 18- to 36-year-old gamers. Members of TEN who are fans of SimCity or Falcon 4.0 can play against other members via modem through the service, and TEN promises a steady growth of role-playing, board/card games, and strategy/wargames in the near future.

TEN works with existing game developers to provide plug-in APIs (or Application Programming Interfaces). These extensions let multi-player games work via the TEN network and become accessible through the TEN "Lobby," where such game

Web-based Games

If you're looking for Web-based games, there's plenty to choose from. Just don't get your hopes up. From Hangman (http://cybersight.com/cgi-bin/cs/hangman) to BlackJack (http://www.ua.com/blackjack/bj.html) to a BattleShip rip-off (http://polaris.biology.ucla.edu:8088/ships/Home.shtml) and TV game show copies, such as HyperJeopardy (http://www.hype.com/game_show/), they're out there and their numbers are growing. Unfortunately, these types of games lack the entertainment impact of a stand-alone game because of HTML's limitations. For example, in BlackJack, once the server has dealt you and the "dealer" a hand, you click on a button next to an amount of money to place a bet. Once you click on the "bet" button, the form's script then sends your info to its CGI server, which in turn churns out random cards and sends a new HTML page to your screen. You'll wait while a whole new page full of images has to draw. Want another card? Click "hit me," and off goes the CGI server to do its random business again. It works, but even over a super-fast T1 line, the thrill of being able to play Web Blackjack is quickly stifled.

statistics as player scores, halls of fame, and other member records are kept.

TEN Members receive a CD-ROM with all available multi-player games. They also get access to a software library, live chat, a messaging area, the Internet, and local e-mail, not to mention entertainment and game news and reviews. Plus, although we haven't seen this, TEN says it gives Web access through a propriety browser. At press time, prices were $10.95 a month for five hours of access, plus $3 per hour for each subsequent hour. While there are promises of Macintosh software soon, TEN is only supporting Windows 95 at this point.

Outland

http://www.outland.com

One of TEN's developmental partners is Outland (which is presently for Macs only). Software is downloadable from Outland's Web site (**http://www.outland.com/**), or through FTP (**ftp://ftp.outland.com**). Via a TCP connection (either by modem or direct connection), players connect to Outland and are faced with a menu of playing options.

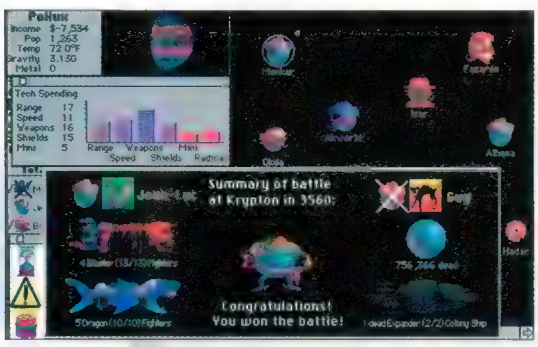
At press time, games included Spaceward Ho!, in which you play the leader of a spacefaring race; Galley, where members battle others with mines and cannons from the deck of their sailing vessel; plus standards such as Chess, Backgammon, Reversi, and Hearts. To subscribe to Outland, just sign on as a new user using the Outland software (it'll ask for a credit card number, so be prepared). For $9.95 a month, Outland members have unlimited access to the service 24 hours a day.

Concentric Network Corp.

http://www.cris.com/

At press time, Concentric Network Corp., a steadily growing international internet access provider, was touting free multi-player game connection as part of its membership package. Its Game Connection is an area on its server that allows you to play network and modem-to-modem games (such as Doom and Descent) against other members. Concentric also offers a gateway to Kesmai Corp.'s Air Warrior and Interactive Creation's Warbirds.

Concentric offers flat-rate connections, or subscription plans for as low as $7.95 per month, as well as free space for your own Web page. For more information, head over to **http://www.cris.com/**, write cncsales@concentric.net, or call 517 895 0500.

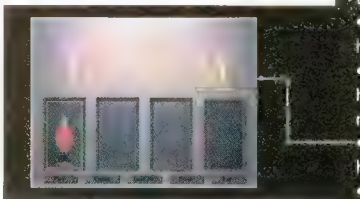


Spaceward Ho! is one of the multi-player games available for play through Outland.

Other Choice Choices

Although you aren't going to find as many different games for your money, there are some other online services with some really choice play options. GEnie, a long-time online service, has two really good action game options for its Windows members. SVGA Air Warriors is a good-looking flight sim that offers pilots everything from biplanes to modern aircraft in multi-player dogfights. Sci-fi fans will want to jump behind the controls of a multi-ton robot in Cyberstrike, the company's newest online addition. If you can't get a hold of some startup software, give the folks at GEnie a call at 1 800 638 9636, or hook into them at http://www.genie.com/.

Fans of id's line of software greats will want to check out PlayNet, a service that features online versions of Doom, Doom II, and Heretic. Although they're kind of expensive (O.K., really expensive) for such limited play options, this is the best way to find live opponents for action gaming if you are far removed from a network. PlayNet can be contacted through 800 PLAY NET, but keep in mind that fees are at about $50 for 30 hours of play. ■



Places to Go to Play...

- **3DO WWW Server**
  http://www.3do.com/
- **Adventure Online Gaming**
  http://www.gameworld.com/
- **Catapult Xband**
  http://www.xband.com
- **DarkForces**
  http://www.armory.com/~tdalton/DarkForces
- **DWANGO**
  http://www.dwango.com
- **EA Web**
  http://www.ea.com/
- **FutureNet: Sega Power**
  http://www.futurenet.co.uk/games/segapower.html
- **Game Boy Page**
  http://www.cs.umd.edu/users/fms/GameBoy/
- **GEnie Services**
  http://www.genie.com/
- **Hyper-Jeopardy**
  http://www.hype.com/game_show
- **Ice Online**
  http://www.iceonline.com/
- **Imagination Network**
  http://www.inngames.com
- **Internet Gaming Standard**
  http://emporium.turnpike.net:80/R/ray/gameinfo.html
- **Kali**
  http://www.axxis.com/kali/
- **Mortal Kombat**
  http://www.cs.ucl.ac.uk/students/A.Espindola/mk/mk.html
- **Nintendo Home Page**
  http://www.nintendo.com/low/low.html
- **Online Entertainment**
  http://www.on-line.co.uk/
- **Papyrus**
  http://www.papy.com
- **Perilous Dreams**
  telnet://pr.mese.com/
- **Sega Saturn**
  http://www.segaoa.com/
- **Sega Web**
  http://www.segaoa.com/new/new.html
- **Sierra OnLine**
  http://www.sierra.com/
- **Sink the Bismark**
  http://polaris.biology.ucla.edu:8088/ships/Home.shtml
- **The MUD Resource Collection**
  http://www.cis.upenn.edu/~lwl/mudinfo.html
- **Total Entertainment Network**
  http://www.ten.net

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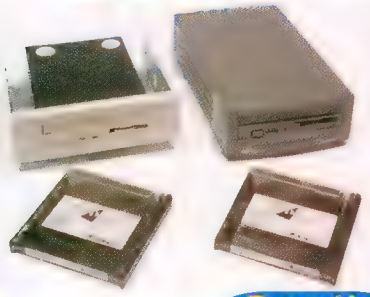

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External for MAC (1 free disk)	$479

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IDE	1080MB	5400rpm	3yr	$219
IDE	1090MB	4500rpm	3yr	$199
SCSI	1080MB	5400rpm	3yr	$235
SCSI	2170MB	7200rpm	5yr	$589
SCSI	4350MB	7200rpm	5yr	$899

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This complete package includes everything you need: Adaptec controller, cables, 1 disk, and Incat Easy-CD Pro full featured software that supports Windows & Macintosh.

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External for Mac $999

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The most trusted name in CD recorders. Each kit includes everything you need including 2 free disks. PC kits includes controller. Model RCD5020

Complete PC Internal	$939
Complete External for PC or MAC	$1239
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Converts any 3 1/2" hard drive into a removable drive. Great for transportability, data interchange, or security needs. Extremely high quality construction. Metal cartridge and frame, cooling fan, SCSI unit has ID select on the cartridge. Qty discounts available.

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850MB	11MS	5400RPM	Seagate	$195
853MB	10MS	4500RPM	Western Digital	$192
1080MB	9.5MS	5400RPM	Fujitsu	$219
1080MB	10MS	5200RPM	Western Digital	$229
1080MB	11MS	5400RPM	Seagate	$229
1090MB	11MS	4500RPM	Fujitsu	$199
1280MB	12MS	5400RPM	Quantum	$248
1280MB	10MS	4500RPM	Western Digital	$269
1620MB	11MS	4500RPM	NEC	$319
1624MB	10MS	5200RPM	Western Digital	$335
1625MB	10.5MS	5400RPM	Seagate	$359
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POPULAR IDE CONTROLLERS (Save $10 with drive)

ISA	16Bit	GSI-18	$55
ISA	16Bit	GSI-21	$64
PCI	32Bit	Tekram DC290S	$55
VESA	32Bit	Tekram DC280E	$60
VESA	32Bit	Promise EIDE2300+	$69

TAPE DRIVES

Prices include 1 free tape! Save $10 with hard drive!

800MB	Conner	$171	800MB	Colorado	$199
1.7Gig	Conner	$229	3.2Gig	Conner	$295

SCSI TAPE DRIVES (bare, no tape)

2Gig	HP	DAT	C1534A	$699
2-4Gig	Conner	QIC	TSM4000	$399
2.3-4.6Gig	Tandberg	QIC	TDC3700	$389
4-8Gig	HP	DAT	C1536A	$799
4-16Gig	Conner	DAT	C4326NP	$929
4-16Gig	HP	DAT	C1533A	$1029
3.5-7Gig	Exabyte	DAT	8205XL	$1259

SCSI HARD DRIVES

850MB	14MS	4500RPM	Quantum	$209
1050MB	12MS	5400RPM	Quantum	$265
1080MB	9.5MS	5400RPM	Fujitsu	$235
1083MB	11MS	4090RPM	NEC	$235
1620MB	11MS	4500RPM	NEC	$359
2050MB	8.5MS	7200RPM	Micropolis	$665
2147MB	8.5MS	5400RPM	Conner	$665
2147MB	9MS	5411RPM	Seagate	$679
2147MB	8MS	7200RPM	Seagate	$799
2150MB	8MS	7200RPM	Quantum	$735
2170MB	9.5MS	7200RPM	Fujitsu	$589
2216MB	8.5MS	5400RPM	Quantum	$635
4290MB	9MS	5400RPM	Seagate	$939
4294MB	8.9MS	7200RPM	Micropolis	$979
4290MB	8MS	7200RPM	Seagate	$1189
4300MB	8.6MS	7200RPM	Quantum	$999
4350MB	9.5MS	7200RPM	Fujitsu	$899
9080MB	11MS	5400RPM	Seagate	$2099
9091MB	12MS	5400RPM	Micropolis	$1999

POPULAR SCSI CONTROLLERS (Save $10 with drive)

ISA	16Bit	Future Domain 1610	$89
ISA	16Bit	Adaptec 1522Kit	$149
ISA	16Bit	Tekram DC300B	$159
ISA	16Bit	Adaptec 1542CKit	$259
VESA	32Bit	Adaptec 2842Kit	$249
PCI	32Bit	Adaptec 2940Kit	$259

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Check out our home page

- *Daily specials*
- *Closeout items*
- *More services on the way.*
- *Current prices*
- *Specifications*

http://www.megahaus.com

CD ROM DRIVES

IDE (ATAPI)

Toshiba	4X	190ms	XM5302B	$149
Teac	6X	110ms	CD56E	$199
New!	8X	150ms	IDECD8X	$299

SCSI

Sanyo	4X	190ms	SH254S	$155
NEC	4X	220ms	CDR4X	$215
Pioneer	4.4X	140ms	DRU124X	$225
NEC	6X	150ms	CDR512	$315
Plextor	6X	145ms	PX63CS	$389
Toshiba	6.7X	120ms	XM3701	$349

CD ROM CHANGERS

NEW! Alps	4X	4 Disk magazine		$369
Pioneer	4.4X	6 Disk	190ms	$459

CD ROM RECORDERS

Hewlett Packard	2X	Internal with controller	$989

Recordable CD ROM Media with Jewel case

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Playing the Stock Market

Minda Sandler

For the intrepid individual investor who's online, it's incredibly easy to join the fray and attempt to land that nest egg via smart stock picks. The Internet has a vast number of resources to help individual investors who want to take control of their portfolios and use independent resources to build investment strategies.

Investment Tools

A good place for intrepid wired investors to start is **INVESTools (http://www.investools.com/)**. If you're looking for information about how a specific company is doing, for instance, search through this site's collection of investment newsletters and research services, as well as reports, earnings estimates, and fund reviews. While there's no monthly fee for use of the site, you do pay for specific services or articles you access.

Another good resource is the **Charles Schwab** Web site (**http://www.schwab.com/**). This well-organized and easy-to-navigate site lets you apply online to open a Schwab account, download a demo of Schwab's portfolio management software, and find out about the many ways to invest your money.

Researching Your Portfolio

Those who want to get a crash course on specific companies must pay a visit to **EDGAR** (Electronic Data Gathering, Analysis, and Retrieval system). Located at **http://www.sec.gov/edgarhp.htm**, the site lets you download the filings that nearly three-quarters of publicly traded U.S. companies submit to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Filings dating back to 1994 are available.

A number of other net sites specialize in providing company research. At **Investor InTouch (http://www.money.com/ssnhome.html)**, you'll gain access to investor relations information and equity research on 15,000-plus companies. **InvestorWEB (http://www.investorweb.com/iwebhome.htm)** publishes company information to help you decide whether to invest.

There's also an automated press release service to keep you updated over time. And **Wall Street Net (http://www.netresource.com/wsn/)** provides the latest on corporate debt and equity financings, monitors companies for you, and has archive data on past transactions.

Real-Time Quotes, Transactions

One of the best sources of stock quotes is the **Security APL Quote Server (http://www.secapl.com/cgi-bin/qs)**. It has a Market Watch page that's updated once every three minutes from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday. The quotes are delayed 20 minutes. If you want to act on this information, click on over to the **NET Investor (http://pawws.com/tni/)**, where you can execute online trades in stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and certificates of deposit traded on major U.S. exchanges. (Accounts come with encrypted numbers and passwords.) Lombard Institutional Brokerage (**http://www.lombard.com**) also lets you perform online trades of stocks and options, plus puts you in touch with a wealth of pricing and volume information. ■

Investor InTouch and Schwab Online are great resources for online investors. If you're not sure you're ready for them, try managing a pretend portfolio at the Stock Market Challenge (http://smc.sierra.com/).

More Places for the Intrepid Investor to Visit

In-Depth Investment News

CNN Business News
http://www2.cnn.com/[illegible]/index.html

InvestorsEdge
http://www.irnet.com/

MCI Business Summary
http://www.fyionline.com/infoMCI/update/BUSINESS-MCI.html

Money & Investing Update
http://update.wsj.com/

netWORTH
http://networth.galt.com/

The Economics/Markets/Investments Index
http://www.mlinet.com/mle/search2.htm

Stock Quotes

Holt Report
gopher://wuecon.wustl.edu:671/00/holt/holt.current

Experimental Stock Market Data
http://www.ai.mit.edu/stocks.html

TIPnet
http://www.tipnet.com/

Great Links

FINWeb
http://www.finweb.com/

Financial Information Link Library
http://www.mbnet.mb.ca:80/~russell/

GNN Personal Finance Center
http://gnn.com/gnn/meta/finance/index.html

Investment Brokerages Guide
http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~jdg/invest_brokers.html

Investment Research
http://www.thegroup.net/invest/ichome.htm

Wall Street Directory
http://www.cts.com:80/~wallst/w_about.htm

Includes playable demos of Virtua Fighter 2, Sega Rally, Slam 'n' Jam and NFL Quarterback Club!

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MARCH 26TH 1996

Sega Rally

Virtua Fighter 2

Slam 'n' Jam

NEXT GENERATION

Sega Saturn Special

Beat the Taxing Times:

Secrets and Insider Tips on Besting Uncle Sam

Todd Marshall

It's the time of year that strikes fear in the hearts of America's working class. Tax time.

Every year, amid the procrastination and April 15 deadline, many of us take the easiest route, and take our licks on returns. It's estimated that millions of dollars that could have actually been deducted are lost annually to old Uncle Sam; that they weren't deducted is simply due to a lack of knowledge. For instance, did you know that you can (under the right situations, no cheating now) deduct your computer, or even your dog, if you use it or him for your business practices? There are also some more obvious ways to take the sting out of tax time, like getting a payment plan from the IRS, or finally breaking down and letting H&R Block do it for you.

But before you throw in the towel, check out the cool Web sites we found that deliver choice insider information to help you beat the tax man. Note, though, that despite the huge improvement of Internet capabilities over the past year, it's still not possible for you to personally file your returns electronically. While filing electronically means it will go through faster and you'll get a return check earlier in the year, you still need an accountant to actually do the deed for you. Check out the Yahoo! offering of wired accountants to your right.

Income Tax Information in Internet

http://www2.best.com/~ftmexpat/html/

When you start your frantic search for tax information on the night of April 14, put this page at the top of your bookmarks. You'll find everything you ever wanted to know about income taxes, but were afraid to ask. There's links to new tax laws, all the tax forms you could ever ask for, state tax information, software, and a variety of newsgroups and FAQs.

The IRS Homepage

http://www.ustreas.gov/treasury/bureaus/irs/irs.html

While it isn't the most visually pleasing, the Internal Revenue Service's home page has some excellent information — like where to file, depending on the state you live in; every single tax form known to man in Adobe Acrobat's PDF format; places to get FREE tax help; and information on Tele-Tax, the IRS' free phone information line where you can get up-to-the-second tax information, and even check on the status of your own refund check.

Also, be sure to check out the wonderful exposé on Peggy Richardson, the commissioner of the IRS.

NestEgg Magazine

http://nestegg.iddis.com/irs/irsdown.html

This magazine of personal finance has gone on the Web recently, and brought with it a ton of tax-related articles (although many are outdated). For some reason, the magazine has also decided to offer the same PDF files that the IRS does (although the IRS server is just as fast, and you know it'll have the most up-to-date forms). *NestEgg* is a pretty cool magazine; be sure to check out some of the other personal finance areas it covers.

Twenty-Five Most Common Tax Preparation Errors

http://www.ey.com/us/tax/25error.htm

It's not quite as entertaining as Dave Letterman's Top 10, but this list was created by Ernst and Young and serves as a nice checklist.

Tips include double-checking your Social Security code and adding up the right-hand column one more time. You'll also learn which documents to include with your filing to speed up your return process.

Tax and Accounting Sites

http://www.uni.edu/schmidt/bookmark.html

Although this is nothing more than a page of links, it's beautifully organized. It has more links to state tax information than we could find anywhere else. There's also links to additional governmental legislation on taxes.

Tax World

http://omer.cba.neu.edu/home

Suddenly, as you surf around, read about taxes, you'll find yourself becoming more and more obsessed about Delaware's current tax legislation on RVs. You must know more, you must know everything. That's when you come here to get a history of how taxes came about.

The Entire Federal Tax Code

http://www.tns.lcs.mit.edu/uscode/

You want the tome. The complete and uncensored federal tax laws of the United States in print. It's here. It's bigger than *War and Peace*. No one has read it all and lived. But seriously, the site also has a search engine, so you can track down specific laws and see what's what, as long as you can speak some legalisms and accountant-ese.

Misc.Taxes FAQ

http://www.cis.ohio-state.edu/hypertext/faq/usenet/taxes-faq/part1/faq.html

Although this is one of the longest HTML documents in history, with no hyperlinks to various parts, there's still some good information written in plain English here. The table of contents at the top helps, but plenty of scrolling is required. Some of the meatier topics include Tele-tax, inheritance and gift laws, and IRS penalties and interest.

Misc.Taxes Newsgroup

news:misc.taxes

For a more kinetic and up-to-date source of information, check one of the few newsgroups on the subject. While this is an ideal place to find new sources of information, take all the "official tax information" found here with a grain of salt.

SoHo Central

http://www.hoaa.com/

For small and home-based offices and businesses, there's a whole different set of rules. The Home Office Association of America is the force behind this page, which is not incredibly heavy on tax information (although it does have several articles on SOHO-related subjects). It gives you a good idea of what the association is about, and what kind of tax tips and tricks it delivers once you become a member. Plus, the membership is tax-deductible.

SoHo America

http://www.soho.org/

Beating the same drum, SoHo America is another organization on the Internet that's worth checking out if you run your own business or work from home. Once again, to get the meaty information, you have to join, and there doesn't appear to be quite as much information available. Nice page, though.

Tax Services and Products

http://www.yahoo.com/Business_and_Economy/Products_and_Services/Financial_Services/Taxes/

Who knew so many accountants had modems? There are hundreds of tax services online offering their ministrations. A few of them have some fairly high-tech set-ups.

Bank of America

http://www.BankAmerica.com/

After you've filed, you may notice that you owe a little more than you'd bargained for. Never fear, corporate enterprise is here!

Get a loan to pay off your taxes. You never know, it could be deductible. ■

VIRTUALLY TRAVELING

OR PRACTICAL TRAVEL PLANS ON THE INTERNET

Wayne Cunningham

I don't know how I got caught up in it, but early Monday morning, I found myself planning a trip to Hong Kong. *She* had said "Festival of Lanterns," then she said, "Hong Kong." Maybe it was the late hour, the champagne. Anything seemed possible. A trip to Hong Kong? Give me something difficult, like finding the next incarnation of the Dalai Lama. So here I was looking for information and resources on the Internet.

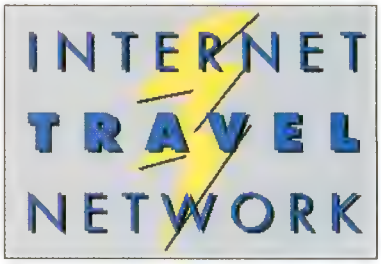
easySABRE is not all that easy. For one thing, it's not Web-accessible. You have to have an account with an online service provider. But it does have a direct connection to a major airline reservation system.

I've used the Internet to plan a vacation before, but I heard that in the interim, there'd been some new advances related to getting flight information and making reservations online. I've always envied the secret knowledge base of travel agents; how they can interpret the strange letters, and know arcane rules like, if you travel on a Tuesday, you'll get a better fare, as long as you're not returning on a Monday or a Tuesday. From what I'd heard, I could now do it all myself, thanks to the Internet, and not be subject to the whims of the travel agents.

I went over to The Sabre Group (**http://www.amrcorp.com/sabr_grp/sabr_grp.htm**), the company that runs an airline reservation network. Its site told me about easySABRE, a service that allows consumers just like me to book their own flights. It also told me that easySABRE is only available on the commercial online services. O.K. So, I went to CompuServe (burning up some online time dollars) and cruised to its Travel section. From there, I gained access to easySABRE, Travel Shopper, and United Connection. I found easySABRE fairly easy to use, and came up with a round trip fare of $1,867.95.

Being a comparison shopper, I exited from easySABRE and went into Travel Shopper. It was just as easy to use, and I found an even lower round trip fare of $1,686.00 on a flight with connections. Progress!

I then tried United Connection, which was very annoying because of the forms it makes you fill out, and then refill out if you want to check another price. There, I came up with



This is one of the most interactive and useful travel sources on the Web.

the same $1,867.95 fare I'd found on easySABRE. Feeling a little bit frustrated, I called a travel agent and got a non-stop, roundtrip fare of $1,731.90, along with the advice that I could probably save some money if I didn't leave on a Saturday. I don't know how travel agents do it, but they're better than I am.

Later, I found a great Web resource for flight reservations at the Internet Travel Network (**http://**

Virtual Tourist presents the world as clickable image map, an obvious and very useful way to zero in on a travel destination for the real or virtual traveler.

Cities in tech-savvy countries often have a number of guides to choose from. Hong Kong has the Online Tourist Guide.

www.itn.net/itn/). It was very easy to use and gave me a lot of options, and I was able to find a roundtrip flight (with connections) for $1,743.90.

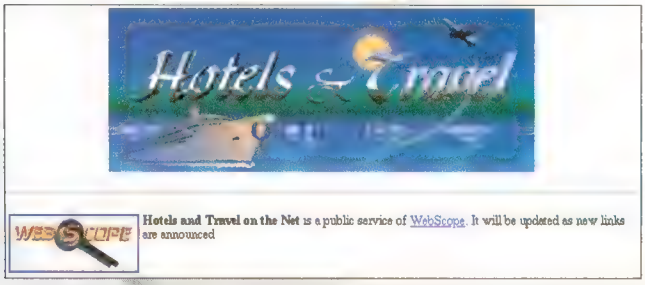
So I knew how I was getting there, but what was "there" going to be like? Previous experience has taught me the wonders of Virtual Tourist (**http://wings.buffalo.edu/world/vt2**) and City.Net (**http://www.city.net/**). A clickable map of the world lets you focus on any city to find out what resources it has on the Web. And Hong Kong, being technically hip, has plenty of online resources, I found.

For example, there is the Hong Kong Online Tourist Guide (**http://www.hk.super.net/~webzone/hk.html**), which has all sorts of information about hotels, things to see, etc. The hotel information was the most useful, because it listed the price range for rooms. Of course, these are in Hong Kong dollars, so I went back to the City.Net page and found a link to foreign currency exchange rates (it was $7.7435 on the day I checked). The only problem with this particular hotel list is that it doesn't have links to any of the individual hotel sites, and I really wanted to make some reservations online. I backed out of City.Net, and went looking for other resources.

The Marriott site covers institutional food services as well as hotels.

A site that focuses more on the hotel part of travel is WebScope's travel section (**http://www.webscope.com/travel**). Through WebScope, I probably found an entry for every single hotel in Hong Kong.

Unfortunately, the only ones with their own Web sites were the Hyatt (**http://www.travelweb.com**), the Marriott (**http://www.marriott.com**), and the Shangri La (**http://www.shangri-la.com/shangri-la/home.html**). And I was cheated from being able to make online reservations since none of these sites allowed it. The reservations section always just gave a phone number. And that would mean I would have to get offline! But if that's our current level of sophistication, so be it.



WebScope has the most useful site for tracking down hotels in a far destination. If the hotels have Web sites, they;re linked here.

Another service I found that didn't particularly appeal to me was Travel Discounts (**http://www.traveldiscounts.com/discount/index.html**). This Web site lists a whole bunch of tour packages for very reasonable prices. And it also lists the schedules, which were generally like "two days here, one day there, another two days here," etc.

Travel Discounts has a promising name, but all it offers are pre-packaged tours. If it's Tuesday, this must be Belgium, anyone?

One of the points of traveling, for me, is to have the freedom to go wherever I want to, so the tour idea was definitely out.

Now, maybe this is anal, but I think it's always a good idea to see what the CIA has to say about a foreign destination. Since our tax dollars pay for this government agency to find out all sorts of international information, we might as well use it in our travel plans. The CIA has been nice enough to make its World Fact Book available online at **http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/95fact/index.html**. This is an excellent resource, with maps and statistics.

Happy Trails! ■

Other Sites for Virtual Travelers

4 Seasons Online Travel Agency
http://www.vgs.com/travel/

Access 2 Travel
http://www.webcom.com/~travel/

All Travel
http://www.all-travel.com/

American International Travel Agency
http://www.amvatrav.com/amvatrav/agency/americ1

American Travel Foundation
http://www.atf.com/index.html

CI Travel
http://www.infi.net/citravel/vactionc.html

Costa Travel Online
http://mmink.com/mmink/kiosks/costa/costatravel.html

Internet Travel Mall
http://io.com:8001/

International Travel Network
http://www.ipgnet.com/travelot.htm

Lonely Planet
http://www.lonelyplanet.com/

Student Travel USA
http://anansi.panix.com/userdirs/sta/home.html

Subway Navigator
http://metro.jussieu.fr:10001/bin/cities/english

The Cheap Travel Page
http://www.prairienet.org/~dbrown/travel.html

Travel as a Travel Agent
http://www.entrepreneurs.net/pdm/travel1.htm

Travel2000
http://www.travel2000.com/discounts/index.html

C·A·N·D·Y·L·A·N·D

ADULT PLAYGROUND

CHECK IT OUT!

18+ This web site is intended for a mature audience. Must be over 18 years.

http://www.candyland.com/net

WIN FREE STUFF ONLINE!

Shel Kimen

Give me free stuff," the masses holler from the bottom of the virtua-stone castle in cyberspace. Sure, the Web looks pretty and has some interesting information to feed your aching brains, plus CDs to buy and games to play. But how can corporations that aren't selling CDs online or building software libraries lure visitors into their labyrinths? Why, of course, by offering free stuff — prizes and dream vacations. The masses will come because there are things to win, win, win.

If these Web mavens want us to come to their sites so badly that they've invented a few CGI scripting gizmos to ask us questions and send us on treasure hunts (all to find the gold at the end of the rainbow), why not take them up on it? I suspect one could play Internet contests and games for prizes all day long, every day for weeks, and still not have to repeat a single one of them. Yes, there *are* that many out there. And in all this surfing and playing and surfing and playing, you're bound to at least win *one* prize — even if it is a lame t-shirt. Still, that's one more t-shirt than you had before. Yes, we are greedy — they are counting on that.

Of the bazillion Web contests available, I've picked some places that regularly offer decent (and even fun) games to play to win your fortune. Not all of these contests are based on the Web, though.

While you may need Web access to find out about them, many of the contests sponsor e-mail trivia questions and clues directly to your Internet account, and you play by sending messages back (with the correct answers, hopefully.) So, if you are of the low bandwidth net surfer variety, fear not. You can play, too!

Thread Treader's WWW Contest Guide
http://www.4cyte.com/ThreadTreader/

You'll probably want to start your journey with a contest directory. Sure as there are a bazillion contests, there are also that many places to find contests. The most helpful contest directory I've found is Thread Treader's WWW Contest. It has a featured contest that usually stays up for a few months, and these picks are usually very good. It also has a "what's new" section for the contests that weren't good enough to be "featured." There were 45 entries in this section when I last visited (that's a lot of potential coffee mugs and bumper stickers to win!). If you are a dawdler, like myself, take a peek at the "last chance" section to see which contests are almost over.

MGM
http://www.mgmua.com/

FOX
http://www.foxnetwork.com/

SONY
http://www.sony.com

Paramount
http://www.paramount.com

If you aren't so anxious to do a search, a good place to start are these movie and entertainment megasites. They're well-known for their elaborate Web hunts and contest marketing endeavors, often with bigger and better prizes — cars, vacations, televisions, etc. — than you'll find elsewhere. Most, if not all, of these companies will have a Web contest at any given moment.

The Fox Kids
http://www.foxkids.com/kids/index.html

Even thought this site is part of the Fox Network site, it has some GREAT kid contests here. They've ranged from asking you to send in names for a drawing to challenging puzzles with Fox Network animated heroes.

The Zweblö Underground Fan Cult
http://www.thoughtport.com/spinnwebe/contest/contest.html

This site was created by a mysterious guy who has a small business designing and selling T-shirts and bumper stickers. He also happens to like dreaming up contests (some of which even have prizes.) The site doesn't look like anything snazzy or ultra-mega fun-cool, but it's ingenious, and could provide hours of fun.

Check out *The Anal Retentive Extravaganza* contest. (Pay attention to the idiots around the world and win a T-shirt.)

Yoyodyne
http://www.yoyo.com/

It has some neat-o games that involve trivia questions, puzzles, and treasures hunts. These kats get big sponsors, like Arrid Extra Dry (get a little closer, heh) and Mazda (Play the "Car Chase" to win a Miata). Yoyodyne also rotates its contests to keep the site interesting, so keep checking back. Yoyo.com also offers lots of play by e-mail contests.

Riddler
http://www.riddler.com

The big whammy is lying at this site. It's the ultimate Internet marketing tool for big businesses right now (cuz it's popular and thinks up great contests). Hunt the net, race the tortoise against the hare, and get great graphics to boot! It is definitely required for the serious contest junkie!

So get started on your path to becoming part of the not-so rich and famous but pleasantly amused Internet crowd of contest goers. There's lots of stuff to be had. ■

The Net's Glossary

AIFF
One format of Mac sound files.

Archie
A database that provides information on where to find specific files and FTP sites. You can search by subject, title, or keyword.

AU Format
Unix sound files.

Baud
The number of analog transitions per second; not to be confused with bps (although it often is).

BBS (Bulletin Board System)
A dial-out or Telnet-in computer that usually provides e-mail, file archives, live chats, and other services and activities. Many are now connected to the Internet.

BPS (bits per second)
The amount of data that can be transmitted over a communications medium.

Client/Server
A relationship between programs running on separate machines in a computer network. The server provides services; the client consumes services. An HTTP server provides Web pages accessible by many clients simultaneously.

Domain Name
Denotes the name of a specific Internet site controlled by a company, school or organization. Our domain name is **thenet-usa.com**.

FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)
Lists of answers to frequently asked questions are usually posted in newsgroups to help newcomers get grounded on a particular topic.

Finger
An Internet protocol used to find out more information about an Internet user.

FTP (File Transfer Protocol)
The Internet protocol for transferring files from one computer to another.

GIF (Graphic Interchange Format)
A graphic file format developed by CompuServe. Most images that appear on the Web are in GIF format.

Gopher
A browsing and searching system that lets you find and retrieve text.

Helper App
Add-on applications that support sound, image, and other formats that your browser can't support by itself.

HTML (HyperText Markup Language)
The coding method used to format documents for the World Wide Web. Web browsers display text, graphics, and links on a Web page by translating HTML tags.

HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol)
The Internet protocol that the Web uses to send information to the client, so the client browser can view Web pages.

Hyperlink/Hotlink
The device that drives intuitive navigation on the Web. Click on a hyperlink or hotlink (usually a graphical icon), and you'll jump to another page within the site you're perusing, or another home page entirely.

Image Map
A graphic image that's used on a Web site as a navigational tool. It's made up of two elements: The graphic you see on the page through your browser, and a text file that contains link information.

IRC (Internet Relay Chat)
The Internet's version of CB radio. IRC lets you join a channel and converse in real-time with other folks on the same channel. Most channels are focused on specific topics of discussion.

ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network)
Digital telephony scheme that allows two simultaneous connections over the same wire; can include audio or data.

ISP (Internet Service Provider)
A company that provides access to the Internet.

JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group)
An algorithm for compressing still images. Motion-JPEG, a variation of JPEG, is used to compress moving images.

Keyword
A word by which subjects can be searched on databases and online services.

MIME (Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions)
MIME types are extensions to files that tell your computer what kind of program to use to view the file. Originally used for e-mail, MIME types are used by your Web browser to launch helper apps.

Modem
The communications device that transmits data between single computers, Internet servers, online services and BBSs.

MPEG (Motion Picture Experts Group)
An algorithm for compressing audio and video; not to be confused with Motion-JPEG.

MUD (multi-user dungeon)
A virtual environment in which multiple players contribute to a text-driven role-playing game.

Newsgroups
Internet message areas that serve communities with specific interests.

PDF (Portable Document Format)
A standard used by Adobe Acrobat to display any sort of document on any computer. Adobe Acrobat Reader is available at **http://www.adobe.com**.

QuickTime
A protocol used by operating systems to provide real-time video and audio capabilities.

RealAudio
A helper app that allows you to hear sound files over Web pages in real-time. Available at **http://www.realaudio.com**.

Search Engine
A utility that locates resources via searches for keywords and subject headers. Yahoo (**http://www.yahoo.com**) and Lycos (**http://lycos.cs.cmu.edu**) use search engines.

SLIP/PPP (Serial Line Internet Protocol/Point-to-Point Protocol)
Communications protocols used over serial lines that are necessary for your computer to dial in.

Smart Agent
A time- and energy-saving utility that scans various Internet resources, and collects files pertinent to your specific interests.

TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol /Internet Protocol)
This set of protocols makes Telnet, FTP, e-mail, and other services possible among computers that don't belong to the same network.

Telnet
These network protocols enable Telnet, FTP, e-mail, and other Internet services to work by creating the WAN (Wide Area Network) that is the Internet.

TIFF (Tag Image File Format)
A standard file format used for scanning, storing, and interchanging color and gray scale graphic images.

Unix
An operating system invented in 1969 at AT&T Bell Laboratories that was made available to researchers and students in 1973. It was used to develop the Internet's communication protocols.

URL (Uniform Resource Locator)
Describes the location and access method of a resource on the Internet. All Web sites have URLs.

Usenet
A network for distributing news items and messages; often referred to simply as newsgroups. See "newsgroups."

Veronica
A database that employs keywords and subject headers for information searches within Gopher space.

VRML (Virtual Reality Modeling Language)
An emerging standard that will let you model and move around in 3-D environments on the Internet.

WAIS (Wide Area Information Server)
A client/server information system that lets users search through databases with a single user interface.

WAV
One of the formats for Windows sound files. ■

Bizarre Site O' The Month

http://www.netgate.net/~ravenna/gotti.html

THE JOHN GOTTI TRIBUTE PAGE

by Jon Phillips

Talk about a railroading: On April 2, 1992, John Gotti, a New York City plumbing parts salesman, was found guilty of 14 federal charges ranging from racketeering to murder. A vindictive prosecution team had somehow tricked a jury into believing that the humble Gotti was in fact a vicious mob boss, and — get this — had ordered the assassination of Paul Castellano, another New York City entrepreneur.

Boss of Bosses? The Teflon Don?

John Gotti, a criminal? Please. Now, true enough, in his younger years, Gotti occasionally demonstrated what might be described as criminal *behavior.* Yes, there were the truck hijackings. And, yes, he was once involved in a bar fight. A gun was involved, and someone died. But do a few youthful indiscretions make John Gotti the so-called *capo di tutti capi* of the so-called "Gambino Crime Family," supposedly the largest of five so-called "Mafia" organizations that supposedly hold Gotham under siege?

People? Let's get real. John Gotti was a benevolent community elder, a saint among men. Just ask Ravenna (ravenna@netgate.net), proprietor of the John Gotti Tribute Page. With a playful wink and a knowing nod, Ravenna presents the *real* John Gotti, the pride of Little Italy, the man who every July 4th financed an Ozone Park block party with food and fireworks for all.

Upon entering the Tribute Page, visitors are greeted with a smiling image of The Dapper Don himself, a man who looks like he's hiding a small one-bedroom cottage in the yoke of his $1,800 tailored suit. Navigate further and you'll find many more photos (one that shows Gotti placing an old-world kiss on the cheek of an associate is captioned, "Some girls have all the luck") as well as brief .WAV files from the mouth of Gotti himself.

The most intriguing content, however, arrives via a quick-and-nifty interactive Mafia-speak quiz, in which viewers are asked to decode FBI surveillance transcripts. Similarly, extended text passages pulled from Bureau tapes are littered throughout the site. Here's Gotti on selfishness:

People *love* John Gotti. Some live in New York City. Others, like Ravenna, live in cyberspace.

"I would be a billionaire if I was lookin' to be a selfish boss. That's not me... All I want is a good sandwich. You see this sandwich here? This tuna sandwich? That's all I want, a good sandwich."

Or, how about Ravenna's favorite quote, in which Gotti reflects on the forbidden term *La Cosa Nostra:*

"And from now on, I'm telling you, if a guy just so mentions 'La'... He just says 'La,' the guy, I'm gonna strangle the %$!%!$!. You know what I mean? He don't have to say 'Cosa Nostra.' Just 'La' and they go."

Indeed, John Gotti, a kind and gentle man.

Ravenna, a 27-year-old vice president of a sheet metal shop, isn't just your typical mob fan who became enamored with the Mafia's — oh, shall we say... *charm* — after seeing "The Godfather." No, her appreciation of *goombata* runs much deeper. In a nutshell, John Gotti *is not* her father figure.

"He's witty. He's fun," she says. "He's an incredibly seductive man. He exudes power and demands respect. Yet, from what I've read, I believe he's also a caring and devoted husband, friend, and father. John Gotti is just really cute."

Ravenna says she updates her site "every waking moment." Future content will include more images, more .WAV files, a Mafia boss lineage chart, a Mafia slang dictionary, and a Mafia cookbook. Of particular interest will be a delicious recipe for *scungilli,* a Sicilian delicacy favored by old-timers. "It's conch meat," says Ravenna, "like from that conch shell the Brady Bunch were blowing in the Hawaii episode."

Ravenna says she plans to add "as much as I can get away with without getting myself in trouble.

"My roommate is convinced I'm going to get us both whacked," she says. "Stacy is my *consigliere* and lets me know when to pull it in a notch. My primary concern is to keep it offbeat and entertaining. It's still a very new page, so it's constantly expanding. I think I'll add a plumbing supplies page soon."

Hey, business is business. Two-to-one odds, Johnny Boy would understand. ■

Your link to a hidden prison culture.

WILL KARAOKE BE FAR BEHIND?

by Crystal Waters

Well, will you look at this? My first anniversary at Imagine Publishing has passed successfully. This month also marks a year of successful avoidance of company karaoke nights at a local Japanese establishment that shall remain nameless to protect the innocent. It's not that I don't believe that karaoke is a well-respected recreational activity; I passionately support its position as an unmatchable interactive multimedia performance art form

I just have this thing about singing in front of a group of strangers (and I have proof that the more sake my co-workers drink, the stranger they get) who are waiting for me to make a complete ass out of myself while singing a classic Carpenters tune.

But while avoiding karaoke nights does have its obvious benefits (I get to watch "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine," "Babylon 5," and/or "Friends" on Thursdays), it suddenly hit me the other day as I was writing about something a little more technically fact-laden that if I want to keep up with the times and corporate America, then I may have to bite the bullet and start practicing sucking down sake and hurling out some ditties. You see, when writing a comparison story about Web browsers, it struck me that Microsoft's Internet Explorer 2.0 is... yes, really... *karaoke-ready*.

According to the Pro•Sing Karaoke Information Server (**http://www.karaoke usa.com/index.html**), karaoke is a Japanese word best translated as "empty orchestra." The Web, therefore, is a perfect place to store tons of empty soundtracks. And imagine this on your Microsoft Internet Explorer screen: the melody of "Lucy In The Sky with Diamonds" playing in the background as an inline QuickTime video of dancers in aerobic athletic shorts with y-back thongs do a chorus line sort of thing in the middle of the screen. A click on the "sing now" button, and text starts scrolling across the screen, giving you the words on queue — and if the author of the site is really creative, there'll be a white ball bouncing along on top of the word that you're supposed to be singing. Hook up a mike to your sound board or sound-in port, turn up the speakers, and viola, instant personal desktop karaoke! To further enhance the experience, read the CU-SeeMe "how-to" I wrote up in the February issue of *The Net* (pages 69-70), and connect a Connectix QuickCam or other video-in peripheral to your computer and watch yourself perform! Whoa, even better yet, drop over to some CU-SeeMe reflector site, such as the Virtual Dorm (**http://www.taponline.com/tap/v-dorm.html** for more information), and entertain the world.

Netscape Navigator people, don't despair. Once Java applets are widespread among the common folk such as myself, netKaraoke will be a breeze. As a matter of fact, I've already talked to our Webmistress, Kathy, about setting up a WebRat Karaoke disco on *The Net*'s site — with a spinning strobe light, bouncing mirror ball, and the WebRat in a white leisure suit.

Kooky Karaoke Sites

The Karaoke Page
http://www.errtech.com/public/rebeit/karaoke.html

Pro•Sing Karaoke Information Page
http://www.karaokeusa.com/index.html

Karaoke WOW!
http://www.primitnet.com/~karaoke/welcome.html

Computer Karaoke Homepage
http://www.teleport.com/~laforest/karaoke.htm

the net next month

Instant Web Pages

How To Set Up A Home Page in Less Than an Hour

We'll Take You Step-by-Step Through:

- Planning What to Put on Your Web Site
- How to Set Up a Web Page on the Major Online Services
- Web Sites That Offer Templates For Your Page
- How to Hire Someone to Create Your Web Site
- Finding an Internet Service Provider to House Your Page

And, if You Have Another 60 Minutes (or More), We'll Give You:

- Graphic Tips
- Layout Do's and Don'ts
- Instructions on Using Adobe's Acrobat

PLUS:

- Copyright Issues for Web Page Authors
- How to Get Your Page Listed on the Popular Search Engines
- Page Makeovers
- Confessions of a Web Master

the net

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sitings

March 1996

The Net's Directory

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SPECIAL:
Gastronomic Delights on the Net 96

We look at three criteria when we review a Web site, and assign icons to show you how the site measures up:

CONTENT

How much content is there, and of what quality? Is there enough to satisfy someone interested in this topic and seeking to learn more about it? Is the content good enough to keep you coming back?

- ***Rich in content***
- ***Fair amount of content***
- ***Needs more content***

AESTHETIC MERIT

How attractive is the site? Though prettiness can't usually stand on it's own, the layout *is* important. Does it pull the viewer in? Does it excite your interest? Does it make you want to come back?

- ***A visual 10!***
- ***Appealing, not great***
- ***A dog***

TECHNOLOGICAL SMARTNESS

How well-constructed is the site? Are there effective navigational tools? To what extent does the site integrate Web technologies like animation, tables, colored backgrounds, custom horizontal rules, etc.? Does the site creatively work around HTML conventions?

- ***Rocket science material***
- ***Not stupid***
- ***Needs a brain***

The best sites we've found are named Sites of the Month. Look for the icon at the right to help identify these sites.

The Internet is growing by leaps and bounds, and it's hard to know exactly where to go when you hop on. At *The Net*, we spend our days researching the net, zipping from here to there, checking out the latest and the greatest.

We've created our Sitings Internet Directory to help filter the net. It will point to places of interest and explain what's of most value there, and, if necessary, what not to waste your precious online time on.

Our Sitings reviewers are both curators and explorers. They're charting the unfamiliar terrain and sorting through the best and worst of what they've found each month. We've asked them to assign overall letter grades (the familiar A-F hierarchy) to the sites, as well as assess them according to three criteria.

And, each month, we pick a subject and do an exhaustive search on it. This month, the subject is gastronomic delights on the net. Feast on it!

art

911 Gallery Home Page

http://www.iquest.net/911/iq_911.html

In case of an artistic emergency, go directly to the 911 Gallery Home Page. The 911 Gallery specializes in digital art: computer graphics, video, and electronic music. Delight your eyeballs by staring into portraits of cyber condors and fractal fish. Play with the interactive paintings hanging on the walls of 3-D rooms. Witness an artist's search for her identity within scratchy portraits of home life in Palestine. Dialing the 911 Gallery will save you from the horrors of visual boredom. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

AIGAlink virtual gallery

http://www.dol.com/AIGA/door.html

Wonderful. The American Institute of Graphic Arts has developed a beautiful, well-constructed Web site that walks you through a graphics arts exhibition in Philadelphia. Click your way through three rooms (more are expected soon) of outstanding projects, from interior signage to advertisement posters. And fear not: high-resolution graphics won't clog your bandwidth. The images are appropriately compressed to load quickly and maintain high quality. —*LS*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Art Deco-Erté Museum

http://www.webcom.com/~tuazon/ajarts/erte.html

Having created his first successful costume design at the age of five, Erté went on to become one of the foremost fashion designers of the early twentieth century. The Art Deco Erté Museum displays some of Erté's most famous designs for the Folies-Bergère in Paris, including a costume for the Diamond in "Les Pierres Précieuses" and a silver lamé costume, complete with pearl wings and ebony-plumed cap, that Erté himself wore to a ball. A Web site never looked so fashionable. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

ArtServe, Art & Architecture

http://rubens.anu.edu.au/

This is rated as one of Point Survey's Top 5% of all Web sites. Although that little purple star logo has become a joke among Internet users (it's about as rare as the tenth America Online disk you've gotten for free this month), this site might actually deserve the award — at least in terms of content. It's a huge, searchable (by period, subject, or title of work) database of art and architecture that's 16,000 images thick. The organization is a little difficult to follow at times, but considering the amazing amount of resources archived, it's pretty good. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

AS220

http://www.ids.net/~as220/home.html

The creator of this bold, blinking space, AS220, is a non-profit Rhode Island organization for the arts. It's taken its off-line community by storm with a local

cafe, a publicly accessible darkroom, youth arts conferences, and more. The cyber companion unfortunately doesn't beam with the same ambition. It's merely one step above an advertisement for the real-life services, along with local resources, links to artsy sites, and some tech talk. If you poke around long enough, though, you'll find some nice artwork. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Barcelona Pavilion

http://www.auckland.ac.nz/arch/mats/barcelona/01_2.html

Six months ago, this was little more than a series of photographs of the Barcelona Pavilion — an exhibition designed by Mies Van Der Rohe for the 1929 World's Exhibition — linked together to create the illusion of a 3D space. It was a creative way to explore a modern architectural masterpiece. But since then, the creators have added QuickTime VR (download the demo; it's a heavy 2.8MB but worth it), a smoother layout, and a place for tourists to post and read comments. You won't find much actual information about the exhibition or Mies. It's purely aesthetics — and well done. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

CENTRIPEDUS CENTER SEEKING ART

http://www.centripedus.com/

Artists aren't well-known for their ability to act coherently, and the Centripedus Center Seeking Art Web site won't shatter this notion. On the surface, the site appears to be an avant-garde commercial page, but the more you sink into the center, the more you'll realize you're inside a chaotic mess of political and philosophical diatribes about Christianity and capitalism. The site proudly promotes online art revolutions and various Web projects, including the promotional art for the movie *The Net*. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A+**

dalilink.html

http://www.mercon.com/mercon/carl/dali-sur.html

Melting clocks and broken telephones decorate Salvador Dali's surrealist art for reasons other than shock value. Dalilink, the home page for this unusual artist, traces how events in Dali's life — among them, a meeting with Sigmund Freud and a narrow escape from the Nazi invasion of France — got translated in his art. The site has plenty of links to other Dali-obsessed pages and museum exhibits. Dalilink offers an Internet refuge for this madman who was not mad. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Goya

http://www.primenet.com/~image1/goya/goya.html

Francisco Goya led classical painting into the modern world with a unique and ever-changing style. This site, devoted to the works of Goya, is also unique. It lacks the typical barrage of hyperlinks to miscellaneous Web resources, feedback loops, and advertisements. Instead, it's a stunning display of the artist's works. Each page is accompanied by a well-written biographical note. The works are presented in chronological order to demonstrate Goya's evolution — he lost his hearing in 1792, after which his paintings took on an increasing aura of dark despondence. Well done. —*KV*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	*A visual 10!*	*Rocket science material*
Fair amount of content	*Appealing, not great*	*Not stupid*
Needs more content	*A dog*	*Needs a brain*

SITE OF THE MONTH

net MARCH 1996

Favela

http://www.favela.org/intro/main.html

I'm in love with this site. It is living art. It is pages and pages of ethereal transcription. It is a journey through minds of all origins and politics that are often silenced. It is a voice for inspired artists, writers, film makers, and self-proclaimed visionaries. (One look at the guest book will verify there are many Internet travelers who share this opinion.)

At the same time, its direct, political, confrontational nature ignites realistic horror. The content moves us through an all-too-close look at the declining state of human affairs — racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, and hate. Its haunting perspective is nonetheless appreciated, as too few are willing to walk this line of open expression about our present social condition.

Favela is a collective/collaborative organization of seven members who do not use the standard "staff model" of hierarchical positions — editor, art director, assistant, etc. The site went live on the midnight between Halloween and Dia de Los Muertes (Day of the Dead), and throughout, it symbolically emphasizes its relationship to this haunting moment of the year. There's also symbolism in the subject/index headings, titled Visible Frenzy, Rabid Sphinx, Meat Locker, Detonation Slate, and Shooting Range. Within these areas, you'll find original artwork, political and social essays, creative writing, and a "coming soon" ubiquitous link page.

Favela's members describe their approach as "cross-cultural, cross-generational, and cross-gender. We are invested in using technology and communication for cultural production on the Internet. We act as architects of a context for free play between individuals invested in aesthetics, ideas, and social content." On the technical side, the creators are masters of HTML using BBEdit. They script their own C and Perl code, use Macs for content creation, and employ a Sun Internet Server to power the site. This write-up is heavy in tone because the site is heavy in essence and only recommended for those who have heart to think freely and explore the ideas of others. I almost feel that to use the usual "outstanding graphics" and "high-density content" ratings for Favela would do little to describe the inspiration I felt when browsing, no, pouring over this site. It is beyond a doubt the most moving, aesthetically pleasing, and thought-provoking Web creation I have seen thus far. I hope that this review encourages you to visit the site. I guarantee it will be worth your time. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A+**

Kaleidoscope Resource

http://www.eiu.edu/ac/busi/lum/kr.html

All those who remember spending their childhood hours gazing into a small rod with mirrors and colored glass will appreciate the Kaleidoscope Resource This online guide has information on kaleidoscope history, artists, material sources for making a kaleidoscope, societies, Clifford Pickover's Kaleidoscope image of the month, and more.

The site also shows you how to transform your computer screen into an ever-changing display of colors with kaleidoscope screen savers. Visitors will find that you don't have to be a child to experience the random artistic beauty of the Kaleidoscope Resource Page. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Karl Kotas Home Page

http://www.users.interport.net/~karlvent/

A man of many masks, Karl Kotas shamelessly displays his work as a graphic artist, painter, cartoonist, inde-

One example from Karl Kotas' Virtual Gallery, part of his Web site.

pendent publisher, and art director on his home page. The Virtual Gallery has collages with graffiti-esque images of neon camels, women with five eyes, and alligators in suits. Kotas also creates an adult comic book series called "Vent," featuring semi-nude lions wearing go-go boots. For bizarre erotica on the net, sneak over to the erotica section, which exhibits an odd digital mirage of nude women. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Neil Harrison Website

http://www.nol.net/~nil/dali.html

Neil Harrison Website is home to the Dali Virtual Museum of Art and satisfies the surrealist cravings of art-starved net surfers. Using an interactive map, visitors can wander through various rooms, including the Great Hall, which displays the famous paintings "Disintegration of the Persistence of Memory" and "The Christ of St. John of the Cross." Biographical information on this artist seems to be unimportant to the virtual museum curators, but the plethora of Dali photographs and paintings will satiate any hungry minds running through these halls of art. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

The Chagall Windows

http://www1.huji.ac.il/md/chagall/chagall.html

Even with all the hype that accompanied Windows 95, some windows still exist that represent an entity more powerful even than Bill Gates. The Chagall Windows site celebrates Mark Chagall's stained glass portraits of the 12 sons of the Biblical patriarch Jacob; the windows now hang in the synagogue of the Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Center in Jerusalem, Israel. The site has biographical information on Chagall, who created the windows to honor his Jewish parents, and pictures of the actual windows illustrated with animals, fish, flowers, and Jewish symbols. This site underscores how the Web can be used as an artistic tribute. —*BJB*

Chagall's window for Jacob's eighth son, Zebulon, celebrates that Zebulon dwelled by the sea with fish imagery.

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Victoria Benatar Urban HOME PAGE

http://www.columbia.edu/~vb45/

Victoria is an architecture graduate student at Columbia University who's displaying some of her works on her home page. Though the site is not stunningly spectacular, it contains an interesting project about urban housing in Harlem that's inspiring (if you're someone who's interested in urban architecture). She's also built an area for the Columbia Urban Housing Department, and includes work from other students who don't have their own pages. Worth a visit for archi-types. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Vintage Ink & Paint

http://www.earthlink.net/~sworth/

There certainly is a vast amount of information here, though you'll have to take a nap on the scroll bar to get it. Yes, it's another page of infinite length. Despite this slight annoyance, the remaining layout is easy to read and the content is good. Visitors learn about collecting animation art, as well as how and where to purchase it. They also can search a glossary of animation-related terms and learn about restoration processes. Valuable for collectors. —*LS*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

VIRTUAL GALLERY

http://oroppas.sec.or.jp/Gallery/GALLERY2.html

This is a great site for casual Image browsing. If you want to see pictures of artwork from Japan, there are hundreds to choose from here. The pictures span most mediums — painting, printing, sculpture, architecture, and design. Equally impressive is the kids' gallery, which is organized by subject categories: monsters, animals, parents, etc. There's also an open call for kids to submit artwork, so get your budding Van Goghs started now. The site is translated in both English and Japanese, for an oh-so-international effect. It's extremely well done. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

WEBSTOCK

http://ching.com/

First there was Woodstock, then Wigstock, now Webstock. As a virtual art colony in Cyberia, Webstock promotes alternative art, music, and philosophy. Discover "the sound sculptures" or lap drums of composer Ken Lovelett. Ponder the significance of artist Justin Love's portraits of two black cats eating watermelon. Or read about brain simulators, astrology, Lake Klamath Blue Green Algae, and WomanStock. Webstock would make any Zippy proud to hold up the peace sign in cyberspace. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Welcome to Cyberlab 7

http://www.well.com/user/tcircus/Cyberlab7/index.html

Art for the Millennium. Well, it could have been good. It starts off with a sharp, new agey, dreamy logo and a pitch about blending art and technology. There are lofty headings — Visual Realities, Millennium Events, and Planet Change Projects. The problem is that not one of the interactive video clips or links to events or "projects" went anywhere beyond an error 404 (File Not Found.) I must ask: Are our Millennium prophets slacking, or are they just a mess at using HTML? —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

Zupergraphyx

http://www.ping.be/Zupergraphyx!/

Pigs produce bacon, pork, and really cool Web sites. On Zupergraphyx, each part of a patchwork pig will take you on an interesting journey inside the mind of a Web designer. The quality of the graphics alone will make any pig's tail curl. Rub the pig's lower back and it'll take you through the step-by-step process of making a Web page for a finicky client. Poke the pig's rear and you'll get information on a text editor called Futplex. Lots of useful information just from dissecting a cyber piggy. —*BJB*

The clickable patchwork pig at the Zupergraphyx site will delight even the vegetarians in the crowd.

net rating: *overall:* **A+**

bizarre

A Year in the Life of a Nerd

http://www.missouri.edu/~c667778/diary.html

Did you ever wonder what it was like to be a nerd in high school? Of course not. Like Andrew Hicks, you were probably an awkward, zit-faced, date-deprived "loser." Andrew's exhaustive online journal follows his senior year in high school and, if you search a bit, his present life as a college freshman. This Epic of Nerdimesh reveals Andrew's private thoughts about his idiot roommate, working in the food hall, and the problems of nerdom. It's not the Spelling-esque world of "90210," but it's almost every bit as engaging. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Abandoned Site Version 1.8

http://www.xtc.net/~nil/?Yahoo

This site is not much more than an exhaustive series of nothing-links that don't do much and don't lead anywhere. It's this very quality that lends the site a Zen-like air and leads the user into a new level of spiritual consciousness. What does it all mean? Nothing. There is not one bit of anything useful in this 800-page koan. Constantly chastising you for wasting your time, yet daring you to link to the next page, the Abandoned Site is humorous, entertaining, and ultimately pointless. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Air America Homepage

http://pages.prodigy.com/NY/airplane/AAindex.html

These people love to fly planes. Commercial airline jets to be exact. They fly, organize, and meticulously schedule a virtual commercial airline and are very serious about it. You have to admire the obsessive detail lavished on their love of the world of the airlines. When I first looked at the site, it took me a full minute to figure out that it wasn't real. If you get creamy at the thought of 747s, load up your flight simulator and moonlight as a virtual airline pilot. The only thing missing is the menu of delectable airline snacks. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Ask Dr. Neutrino

http:/nike.phy.bris.ac.uk/dr/ask.html

Dr. Neutrino answers physics questions submitted by net citizenry. They range from the metaphysical ("Are time and space inseparable?") and the straightforward ("How do we know how far away stars are?") to the ridiculous ("What is the terminal velocity of an antelope?"). The good doctor writes clearly, often with a sense of humor. Users are encouraged to answer questions, too, which sometimes leads to showing off big-brain capability or ramblings from those under the influence of pot, caffeine, or both. Entertaining and educational. The only drawback is the inability to find a question by topic. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

beanie

http://granite.sentex.net/~bracken/beanie.html

"This is where freedom begins," says beanie's introductory manifesto. The author obviously has an agenda, though it's difficult to understand what it is. Sarcastic stickman cartoons about friendship, happiness, and heaven have a delightfully uncomfortable tone, while a long story about a monster alien who turns out to be Yoda doesn't convey the sense of tongue-in-cheek paranoia it should. However, it is easy to navigate the inconsistent content. Worth a look. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

House of Slime

http://www.teleport.com/~jleon/

According to John Stone, the sterile world of computers is missing one thing: slime. Slime exists almost everywhere you look, and this slime-themed home page promises to deliver you there. The real star of this site, however, is the slimy Slug. It features diagrams, photos, slug-lore, and links to other slug-sites. The information on the site is on the skimpy side, but it's attractively packaged and humorous in tone. —*MP*

Here's one of John Stone's favorite slug shots, taken in the northwestern woods.

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

List of Dead Presidents

http://www.csn.net/~mhand/Presidents/

Manus Hand visited the grave sites of every dead president, save four, and has the pictures to prove it. See photos of Manus in front of the final resting places of our former great, not-so-great, and totally forgettable leaders. Simple to navigate and brilliant in concept, this site deserves a visit by anyone who enjoys exploring people's odd obsessions. If you beg him, maybe he'll bring you back a Millard Fillmore Memorial T-shirt when he finally gets there. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Mike and Anthony's Wired Room

http://saturn.dsu.edu/room/

A couple of self-professed computer geeks showcase their dorm room at Dakota State University. General information includes current temperature, door status (open or closed), and the number of socks each has in his drawers. You can easily navigate to an overhead diagram of the room and photos of interesting objects, or interact by turning on a fan for up to 20 seconds. The FAQs list is funny. I was concerned these guys might be real losers with too much time on their hands, except they have a great sense of humor and girlfriends. Go visit. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Needful Things

http://www.pvv.unit.no/~bct/spypose/

Yet another waste of electrons from some dweeb who thinks unpleasant body functions are worthy of a Web site. This time it's vomiting, with a bonus discussion of air-sickness bags. Of absolutely no interest to anyone except frat guys. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Page of Jeff's

http://www.planettell.com/planett/PJeff/pageofjeff.html

This could also be called a "Page of Jeffs." A repository for all net users with said moniker in common to link home

A link to a site about musician Jeff Joad is just one of the Jeff pages you'll get access to at the Page of Jeff's site.

pages and talk about all things of concern to Jeffworld. If you're a Jeff, you need this page. If not, skip it. The concept doesn't hold up for long, especially with the ordinary layout. Maybe they need to include famous Jeffs, but really, who's going to care? Except a Jeff, of course. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Panic Encyclopedia

http://128.2.19.107/ctheory/panic/panic_contents.html

The Panic Encyclopedia describes itself as the "definitive guide to the postmodern scene," but this site has an outdated and heavy-handed feel.

Even if you drop a Baudrillard reference into every conversation, or still think semiotics are a badge of hipness, this tedious site will put you to sleep faster than a "Herman's Head" reunion show. Taken from a 1989 book, this postmodern cyber tome feels outdated, with its copious references to Oliver North and Jim Baker. Even poor Elvis is dissected as a Jungian archetype. If I wanted to read this kind of stuff, I could get a Master's Degree. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

Pigeons: Amiable Urbanites

http://www.envirolink.org/arrs/peta/factsheets/wildlife/wil6_pigeons.html

Pigeon facts, brought to you by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. The site begins with the heart-tugging story of Cher Ami, the heroic pigeon, then attempts to clear up the bad rap that "rock doves" (or "flying rats," depending on your sensibilities) have gotten regarding disease. It also discusses humane methods to keep them from nesting in buildings. The PETA folks do great outreach for all mistreated critters, and here they prove they don't play favorites by championing just the cuter animals. I hope they draw the line at cockroaches, however. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Spies Surveillance Privacy Personal Protection

http://www.spyzone.com/

Do you need a factory-fresh REMOTE CONTROLLED SURVEILLANCE SUB for clandestine underwater bikini shots? Or perhaps a USED ARMORED CAR for those family vacations in Belfast or Beirut? If you have a few hundred thousand dollars burning a hole in your pocket, this is the place to go. The organization of the site, however, leaves a bit to be desired. It takes a while to find pictures of the cool spy stuff, and the product information is a bit spotty. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Feeble Gourmet

http://nosferatu.nas.nasa.gov/~rat/gourmet/

Karl Schilke, aka rAT, has generously detailed every workday lunch since April 18, 1995, including where, what he ate, and notes on the meal. Discover that on 4/24/95 the "lemon sauce [was] very tangy and fresh" at the Golden Wok, but on 5/8/95 at the same restaurant, he "felt slightly sick and was unable to finish potstickers." The Lunchability Index shows the overall percentage each restaurant has been frequented by him to date. Funny and meticulous detailing, though I wish he had included the address of the Old Country Deli, which rated a bonus "YUM!" several times. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

The Lipstick Page

http://www.wineasy.se/bjornt/lip.html

A library of lipstick information and trivia. Different brands are listed, some with color samples. French products are thoughtfully tagged, so you can avoid buying them to protest France's penchant for nuking coral reefs. Makeup tips and consumer forum have practical information for beginners and experts alike. Kind of cute and it's laid out well, but it's not weird enough to be truly interesting, and not in-depth enough if you have a serious lipstick jones. It's still in progress, but for now, kiss it off. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

The Winkie Gallery

http://www.jazzie.com/winkies/winkie3.html

The Winkies are triangular cartoon characters taken from an old computer game. The Winkie Gallery is filled with

The Egyptian Winkie, shown here, is a long-lost relation of the Winkies.

various artistic renditions of these "lovable" space aliens: a Winkie with an axe, a Winkie in love, etc. It's nicely put together, with small images linked to larger GIFs. The main problem is that the Winkies themselves are annoying. If you like cutsey humor, you'll probably fall in love with these denizens. But I wonder why the Exon Amendment couldn't censor this stuff. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Todd's Gallery of Pathetic Human Regret

http://www.eden.com/~tfast/regret1.html

Todd exposes his own closeted skeletons and airs dirty linen. Categorized lists of personal regrets from childhood through high school (with the college years soon to come) include not sticking up for friends when he had the chance, believing a science teacher was genius, and being unable to convince pals the nearby woods were haunted by invisible dinosaurs. However, Todd's biggest regret is having contact with stupidity. The site is easy to navigate, and easy on the eyes, too. Equal parts confession and rant, this is a well-written and funny self-portrait. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Virtual Kissing Booth

http://www.whitehawk.com/vkb/

Each time you enter the virtual "kissing booth," you're greeted by a different photo of a wholesome girl and wacky caption underneath. I assume the next step is to smooch your monitor. MMM-MMMM! Since my monitor tastes more like chicken than a girl, the novelty wore off quickly. Oddly, in none of the pictures I encountered were the girls even puckering up, and most of the photos look like head shots from a second-rate casting office. Fortunately they are attempting to recruit some new models. With some more variety, this could be an entertaining place. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Welcome to Passport Online

http://www.passport.ca/

Passport Online touts itself as Toronto's biggest service provider. Its home page is mostly promotional junk for its service, but down at the bottom of the page is a tiny hidden treasure: Dyslexicon!, a Web-accessible MOO-like chat area. What makes it so special? The place is crawling with Canadians. Pretend you're a lumberjack from Quebec and only speak in a French accent! Bait Canadians by asking them what state they live in! A small diversion for the terminally bored. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

business

1st Steps Cool Marketing Resources and Tools

http://www.interbiznet.com/ibn/nomad.html

A diamond in the rough, Internet Business Network has scanned the Web for info on Web-marketing and selling, and critiqued sites for marketing savvy. It comes up short on information design, though: the newsbits, tips, and links are buried in tiny type by date — fairly meaningless for categorization. If you're interested in developing a business Web site, or marketing your stuff online, you'll find a few good ideas and links embedded here. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

1st Steps links you to sites that are models for businesses that want to go online. One it's particularly impressed with is Tripod (http://www.tripod.com/), a zine geared to GenXers.

MarketPlace
http://www.mktplace.com/home1045/

If you like business analysis or aren't shy about sending contact info to marketeers, MarketPlace might be for you. It's a front page for a Dun and Bradstreet CD-ROM offering market research by industry, a national directory of service businesses, and other business research tools. You must register (for free) to access the database. Pull up "eating places/restaurants," for example, to get the estimated number in the U.S., annual sales, number employed, and company size, location, and specialty data. The information isn't dated or referenced, so you might want to take it with a grain of salt. current. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

Netresource.com Home
http://www.netresource.com/

Remember the joke about consultants? They borrow your watch to tell you what time it is. Netresource is kind of like that — a Web marketing consultant whose site is virtually all links to pages it's created for clients. The only value here is a serviceable article about the pros and cons of marketing on the Internet. You can have a memorable Catch-22 experience at the search button, which instructs you to "enter a search pattern," which in turn leads you to the command, "enter a search string." Never did find out what I should search for. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Results Unlimited Helps You Do More Business With Less Effort
http://www.widdl.com/results/

What were the creators thinking? There's less text here than on a bus ad — and zero value. Apparently, these folks want to sell you marketing consulting and training services, and, of course, videos. The links go to a paragraph or two of teaser copy: "If you'd like to do more business with less effort, you can either sell more or reduce your cost of doing business." And hey — Results Unlimited can work with you on both. Just send e-mail. What's really unlimited here is lameness. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **F**

Welcome to Access Business Online
http://www.clickit.com/touch/home.htm

It's image map city at Access Business Online, which epitomizes entrepreneurialism on the Web at its most overblown. The site promotes business self-help books and videos, canned how-to-ask-for-more-money articles, and a few links outside to daily news sources. There's an ever-present, very busy-looking grid to "guide" you through clips and product pitches. For all the elaborate front-end, it's not a smart guide. Too bad Access Business Online doesn't follow its own quote-to-live-by: "Do one thing. Do it well. Do it better than anyone else. Do it for less." —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **D+**

corporate

Amiga Technologies Homepage
http://www.AMIGA.de/

They still make Amigas? That's about all I learned here. It doesn't get any more basic than this. No fancy graphics, not much text, few links (not that there are a lot of other Amiga sites to link to). Some parts are only in German, but I doubt non-speakers are missing much. I did learn that the Amiga "is the first choice of graphics professionals." Yeah, sure. If you're an Amiga fan or owner, you probably don't have a lot of sites to choose from, but for the other 99.9 percent of the population, stay away. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **D-**

Apple Computer
http://www.apple.com/

I'm a big Apple fan, so I expected a lot from this site. I found it had very solid, in-depth information about Apple and its programs. But after looking around for an hour, I felt something was missing: style. The site is just plain dry. True, there's a good support section, lots of ra-ra Apple info, and a nice special exhibit containing excellent pictures and extensive annotation. Don't miss the "Open Doc" section in the technologies and research area; if you have the time and bandwidth, download the example. But all of this needs to be better presented. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

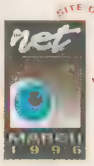
Citicorp Citibank Home Page
http://www.citibank.com/

Too bad Citibank didn't spend as much energy on its front-end home page (boring, boring, boring) as it did on the product/service pages or credit card information page (very well done). They weren't accepting online credit card applications when I last checked, but it's a possibility by the time you read this. They also have student loan information (which you can apply for online, though heed the warning — it's not secure yet.) Also of use is the searchable database of Citibank branches worldwide — just in case you need a cash advance from Argentina. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Corbis
http://www.corbis.com/

Sony Online
http://www.sony.com/

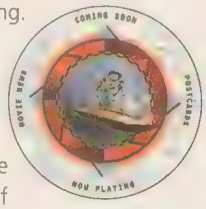


Instead of taking several months to give Sony several different Site of the Month awards — music, gaming, film, etc. — for its amazing Web site, I thought it would be more efficient to mix it all together and name Sony as the best "corporate" site of the month. Know in advance that it is superb in all the aforementioned entertainment arenas.

The "Music" section offers sound and video clips of featured artists (the offerings regularly rotate to avoid redundancy), tour information, online catalogs with *stuff* to buy, like T-shirts, posters, etc. (though there's no online ordering yet), and an updated news area — for all the fresh gossip. Actually, most of the news is PR material, but it's entertaining. Sony also sponsors at least two, sometimes three, live chats via America Online (**Keyword: live**) each month with Sony recording artists — with transcripts available on the Sony Web site.

The "Pictures" section traverses though cinema, video, and television, highlighting established, specially featured, and upcoming projects to keep you current and well-informed. There's a listing of how to find a Sony theater near you, as well as what might be playing there. When I last checked the site, the newest movie addition was *Jumanji*, a feature film starring Robin Williams. The site for this one movie was several pages thick, with "behind-the-scenes" interviews and profiles, video clips, and an online contest to win merchandise.

And let's talk interactive. Yup. The gaming industry's little media darling, the Sony PlayStation, has a home of its own on the Sony Interactive site, complete with game updates and all the technical specifications to leave bits-and-bytes types drooling. Sony also has screen savers here, and every now and then offers a free one! And, though all of these areas have their own separate catalogs, there's a monster behemoth catalog in the "On Gear" section, should you want to purchase more Sony merchandise... Be prepared to spend a lot of time here, especially if you're heavy into entertainment culture. The graphics are smooth, the layout is easy to navigate, and the content is never ending. —*SK*



net rating: *overall:* **A+**

Excellent. I could spend an entire day at this site, an enormous, well-organized archive of images, many available in high resolution. Especially worthwhile is the Almanac under the Corbis Media section. The Gallery Plan in the Gallery section is done so well I forgot it's useless. You can set up an account that somewhat personalizes your home page

Corbis uses a beautifully designed image map to guide you through the site.

screen to account for your bandwidth and interests. The hi-res images are encrypted, so you have to download their viewer to access them. It always gives me a warm feeling to know that Bill Gates (founder of Corbis) is vigilantly protecting our copyright laws. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Eastman Kodak Company

http://www.kodak.com/

Dang, it's slow! There's plenty of information and nice enough graphics here if you can stand the wait. Search through heaps of press releases, corporate data (mission, background info, etc.), and photography tips, or enter one of the scheduled live chats with a professional photographer. (Transcripts are available, too, for those who missed the chats.) But if you aren't a photographer or fanatical about Kodak, I can't really think of many reasons for you to visit the site. It's just O.K. —*SK*.

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

MasterCard International Pointers

http://www.mastercard.com/

Here's an example of how to keep a corporate site interesting. Sure, Mastercard will bombard you with company information and, of course, an opportunity to apply for a credit card (online in several countries). But Mastercard ups the ante a bit and adds in a hot spot link — complete with clever quotes, contests, a story archive, and an interesting article about secure online transactions (to ease paranoia and spread a little education). It's not a super-fancy-looking site, but it's pretty enough, and the content value certainly is high enough to create a nice balance. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

MCA UNIVERSAL CYBERWALK

http://www.mca.com/

In its usual fashion, MCA/Universal has given an impression of substance to almost non-existent content. I found myself spending 20 minutes trying to figure out the impressive-looking home video library, only to realize there were only images of videocassette covers surrounded by lots of useless buttons. The site does boast some movie clips and actual information about many of their books in the Putnam/Berkeley section, but the music and film sections are quite bare. Overall, you have to search through a lot of fluff to find a very moderate amount of substance. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

MCI

http://www.mci.com/

MCI has an outstanding site. It's huge, with everything from news releases (updated very regularly) and long-distance information to entertainment, customer service, and online paging capabilities. Yes, you can page someone with an MCI or Skytel pager from the Internet — it's easy. The graphics are great (and not bandwidth bandits), and the content is well-organized. While you're browsing, link to InternetMCI (http://www.internetmci.com), which houses all the fashion, entertainment, and misc. fun stuff. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A+**

Merrill Lynch

http://www.ml.com/

Merrill Lynch has fallen into the trap of thinking that having a Web site is enough; if you build it, they will come. This site could have been developed as a great resource to investors and planners. Instead, the homepage has lots of investment buzz words linked to a 250-word statistics-laden info sheet that, in turn, is linked to a form for visitors to fill out. Merrill Lynch uses the info from the form to s-mail glossy advertisements. If you're looking for Merrill Lynch brochures, this is the place for you. For anything else, look elsewhere. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **D+**

Microsoft Corporation

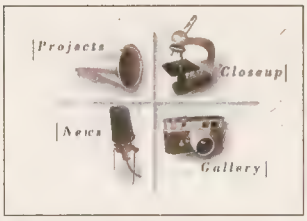
http://www.microsoft.com/

I was expecting quantity and quality from Microsoft's site. I got the former. There's an incredible amount of information here, all extremely well-organized. You can get an outline of the entire site, or more detailed outlines of parts of it. Alternately, the entire site can be searched with a good search engine. Perhaps best of all, Uncle Bill discourses on the office and school of the future. The graphics are pretty dull image maps, although the forms are cool and the pseudo pull-down menus in the support section are kind of interesting, though a bit silly. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

OZ Interactive Inc

http://www.oz.is/OZ-Interactive/Welcome.html



The OZ site is a feast for the eyes, though it's somewhat slow to load.

This imaging company, a leader in computer graphics, seems very interested in VRML (Virtual Reality Markup Language). There's not a whole lot at this site yet, but it's very nice-looking and there are some interesting things coming. They have a VRML gallery already, and are working on a VR record store. The plans for it are laid-out, and are worth a look now if you're interested in Icelandic computer graphics. Definitely bookmark it for later reading; it could be a fascinating site, especially if you have a VRML reader. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Pacific Bell Web HomePage

http://www.pacbell.com/

Well, Pac Bell isn't going to win any design awards, though the graphics are fine. They probably won't win any content or net smartness awards, either. But it's an all right site if you want information on products and telephone rates for the west coast. The press release database is pretty current (and interesting, as Pac Bell has its hands in many things related to the Internet), and it's searchable — thus saving the Web site from total review annihilation. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Sirius Connections

http://www.sirius.com/

This is a nice Web site. "Nice" is the most appropriate word since it's neither spectacular nor lacking, but covers the bases of its business well. Sirius, an Internet access provider for the San Francisco Bay Area, includes all the necessary information about its services. You'll find out about prices, files, account types available, and online registering. There's a reference/help desk for technical and service-related questions. Also, the site looks good, with tasteful icons and a smooth layout. No gimmicks. No frills. Just good and solid. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

The IBM world wide web home page

http://www.ibm.com/

This is kind of your standard corporate page. The support section is very extensive. The IBM plugs are ever-present. The Stretch (just for fun) section is surprisingly good. IBM has also done a very nice job of integrating its "Solutions for a Small Planet" campaign with the Web. There's not much reason to go here unless you just happen to be a Big Blue developer or fan (does IBM have fans?), or a stock investor, but it's a very solid site. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Welcome to Bulldog

http://bulldog.ca/

This group is very fond of itself. There are some interesting pictures here, and the video is somewhat interesting, though it may take you an hour or more to download it. Overall, though, the site is quite dull and lacks much information. Want to take an extensive photo tour of Bulldog's office? I didn't either. But I did find out that the CEO is a new media genius, wine expert, and gourmet cook. Who cares? I found myself saying that a lot. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Welcome to Macromedia

http://www.macromedia.com/

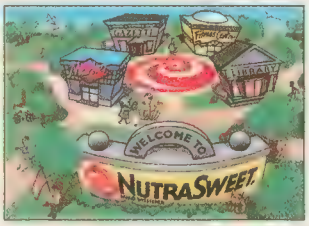
For people who use Macromedia products, this is a very good site. There's a good range of software and plug-ins for use with Macromedia products. There's also a wide range of items, such as industry gossip and demos, that would be of interest to multimedia aficionados. There isn't a great amount of depth to the material, but hopefully, it will fill in over time. Perhaps the coolest feature is the ability to download a file of bookmarks for the Macromedia site that you can import into your browser. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Welcome to NutraSweet

http://www.nutrasweet.com/

NutraSweet, indeed, has a sweet site. It's loaded with health tips, a news area



A charming virtual village is the guiding concept behind the NutraSweet site.

(though it wasn't quite finished when I last checked), a library, which is actually a reference shelf for NutraSweet-related questions, and a market place to distribute NutraSweet-enhanced recipes (yes, cakes, cookies, and pies, guilt-free). And the super bonus: If you enter in your personal data — age, gender, activity level — you'll receive in reply a custom calorie/nutrition recommendation chart. The graphics are great, and you'll never guess who's starring as the site's mascot — Mr. Magoo! Very clever. —*SK*

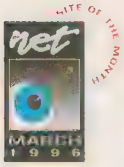
net rating: *overall:* **A**

Winterland World's Greatest T-Shirts

http://www.mca.com/winterland/index.html

Winterland has all the flavors in concert T-shirts, from The Beastie Boys to Hole to Pantera. The Web site has great graphics and a smart layout, but unfortunately, it doesn't do such a great job showing off the merchandise. The site only displays one shirt for each artist, even though in the paper catalog, several shirts are listed for each band. (Did

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	*A visual 10!*	*Rocket science material*
Fair amount of content	*Appealing, not great*	*Not stupid*
Needs more content	*A dog*	*Needs a brain*



Lion's Den

http://www.mgmua.com/

Slick. Very very slick. Each and every page of the movie maven MGM is a well-designed, well-organized near-masterpiece. The graphics appear to be high-res, but take only moments to appear, and when they do, they seem to flow instead of blur (adding a nice sheen to the creation). MGM covers the spectrum well, with information on the motion pictures, television, video, and interactive projects that it produces and sponsors. There is also some background data on the corporate history of MGM and its executives. Oh yes, and don't forget the "Studio Store." With official T-shirts, crew bomber jackets, mugs, and polo shirts, it's as fun as any Hard Rock cafe, and there are no lines! (Though the site warns that it is not secure yet and that MGM will not take responsibility for any transaction problems. You might want to wait a few months before ordering stuff.)

The site's treatment of current and upcoming movies is well-executed. Besides the usual sound, video, and still clips, MGM has interviews with main characters, reviews from national journalists, and phenomenal graphics. Meet the directors, too! I was especially impressed with MGM's treatment of the movie *Leaving Las Vegas*. This area featured interviews with both Nicholas Cage and his character, the estranged alcoholic and lovelorn Ben.

MGM's also done a nice job of promoting its successful television show, "The Outer Limits," and this area is probably the most impressive aspect of the site. It's creative, a bit more interactive, and offers episode profiles and features so that active fans can stay current and also glimpse the future. And, super-kudos to the animated eye ball! If you enter the rock (no secrets revealed here, you'll have to visit to see what I mean), you could win "Outer Limits"-related prizes! Contests are always tasty bait. Monster fans should take note that the monster gallery is indeed worth serious attention, with still clips of creatures that have graced the set of "Outer Limits." Clever. Captivating. And while you're lurking around the site, stop in to the dialog area and exchange "thought-provoking" ideas, not necessarily about "Outer Limits." Overall, MGM is informative, rich in content, and worth frequent visits from Hollywood movie go-ers. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

they run out of space or time?) So, it's not very complete compared to what they actually offer. And yes, you guessed it, no secure transactions yet. Call the 800 number to order. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

film

Audrey Hepburn

http://grove.ufl.edu/~flask/Hepburn.html

I must admit that my knowledge of Audrey Hepburn is rather limited; I recall that she starred in the shallow film adaptation of "Breakfast at Tiffany's," and I suspect she might be related to Katherine Hepburn. This site features a collection of quotes by the famous extolling the virtues of being Audrey. In addition, several of her movies are spotlighted, and links to other Audrey hot spots are available. Most amusing are Audrey's remarks on Audrey — only a genius could manufacture such banal insights and observations. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Chicago International Film Festival

http://www.ddbn.com/filmfest/one.html

Strong, intuitive graphics lead you to useful and specific information about the Chicago International Film Festival. For instance, you can learn what's playing on a particular day, where the different shows are, what time they start, and what each film is about. The highlight of the site is a poster gallery of black-and-white photos, mostly by Skrebneski, of glamorous naked people who have muscular bodies. There are also QuickTime movies to download. If you're a filmmaker, you can get an entry form; if not, there are coffee mugs and T-shirts in the gift shop. —*KB*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Cinevista Videos: An Excellent Selection of Foreign Films From Around the World

http://www.gayweb.com/112/112home.html

The American film industry is a global monster whose far-reaching influence often dwarves other film traditions. Video has improved the situation, but most rental store stock is still overwhelmingly American. The Cinevista site, by contrast, offers a (smallish) selection of foreign films, with critical blurbs, plot summary, and running times. If a film appeals, you can order it online — provided you have a credit card and are willing to suspend legitimate security concerns. This is a simple, single-service site; its usefulness to the cinema lover will grow as the number of films offered increases. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

CineWEB

http://www.cineweb.com/

CineWEB is an online resource for video and film professionals. No matter what your equipment needs, I suspect this extensive index can put you in touch with just the right person. CineWEB has a BBS service that allows messages to be posted to other site visitors, and a $69 fee will get your resume posted for one year. Online trade journals are promised. I found the location index most engaging. So, you want to shoot some scenes in a church? Well, they've got just the Unitarian setting for you — and such affordable rates! —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Coen Brothers Homepage

http://lasarto.cnde.iastate.edu/movies/cultshop/Movies/coen.html

This is your typical fan site, dedicated to two of today's most innovative filmmakers. There are a few images from the films, trivia bits, and profiles of associated actors and directors. I was ready to write this off until I stumbled across one of the most amusing profile pieces I've seen, an Interactive Film Criticism™ that's a must-read for all Coen followers. Trust me — the piece makes the site worth visiting by anyone who has ever pondered the significance of "The Hat" in "Miller's Crossing." —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Feminist Film Reviews

http://www.inform.umd.edu:8080/EdRes/Topic/WomensStudies/FilmReviews

The creators of this site look at films with a feminist perspective, which is very different from the ones you'll find in your Sunday paper's arts sections. No, these aren't man-hating rants (it's a sadly mistaken notion that feminists hate men). Instead, there are thoughtful,

The Feminist Film Reviews site pays homage to women in the movies; it opens with an image of Renee Falconetti in *The Passion of Joan of Arc*.

insightful, and encouraging film reviews, spanning the ranks from small art films to big-budget Hollywood. The aesthetics of the site leave something to be desired (it would take all of 15 minutes to add in some background colors and lose the ASCII type). But that aside, it's a great site. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Gramercy Pictures

http://www.polygram.com/polygram/film.html

At Polygram's Gramercy Pictures page, you'll find a menu of current releases, coming attractions, and recent releases. Mostly, the films listed link to a page of short synopses and not much more. Gramercy's films must have gone over budget and the company couldn't afford to do much more. —*KB*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Hype Movie World Polls Surveys Reviews & Cool Links

http://www.hype.com/movies/home.htm

The strength of this site is not its polls or reviews, but its links and resources. There is a great link list called "The Mother List of All Film-Related Web Sites," which includes everything from Cannes, Sundance, and Berlin to the Lo Res Film and Video Festival in San Francisco. Entries are in Super 8, Hi-8, as well as Mac-based tools. Hype also does the Canadian Film Centre site, and has a related link to the Toronto International Film Group. These resources provide gobs of information about Canadian film culture. —*KB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

James Bond Agent 007 OHMSS

http://www.mcs.net/~klast/www/bond.html

This site is a fine example of what the Web can become when someone with a fanatical devotion to an imaginary spy learns HTML. I found the amount of Bond-related information overwhelming: images, sounds, the films, actors, books, cars — and links to real-world espionage-related sites! You can even find the rules for the James Bond Drinking Game — illegal in Utah, kids. Some might argue the page creator has too much free time. I say, "Good for her!" In this passionless era, it gives me hope to learn someone is so clearly inspired. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Judy Davis

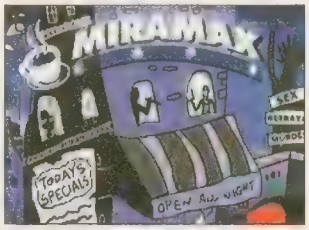
http://gpu.srv.ualberta.ca/~jjay/judy.html

Considering this data was pulled together by one person and then archived "just for the fun of it," the site is pretty good. It's valuable, at least to fans of actress Judy Davis, (*My Brilliant Career*, *Husbands and Wives*, *Impromptu*, and *Where Angels Fear To Tread* are among her more famous films). There's a picture and sound file gallery, lists of upcoming Judy Davis projects, and a live link to join the Judy Davis mailing list (which the Web site creator also maintains). It could be bigger, but everything could always be bigger. It's pretty good as is. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Miramax Films

http://www.miramax.com/



The Miramax cafe on the Web is "open all night," and it features movie news, previews, and lots of prizes.

Miramax's role in the manufacture of culture guarantees an interesting site — its film collection is extensive and includes some of the most challenging works of the past decade. This site has blurbs and images from the latest offerings, faux-insider chat about the actors involved, and such. The heart of it is the Vault, which contains images and video from many of the Miramax films. I know too many people with a hard drive full of one-minute clips, and Miramax will only feed their sickness. The company has made an effort to give the Web surfer reason to visit again. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

More Barrymore Than Ever Before

http://www4.ncsu.edu/eos/users/r/rfbatcho/www/drew/

If you're up late in your dorm room eating rice cakes and Cheetos and have a thing for Miss Barrymore, this site may suffice. There are pictures of her in various sultry poses, ranging from a topless shot of her as a prepubescent in boxing gloves to Drew dressed up in a corset and hoop skirt. The best part is the site's link to David Woodward's Drew Page, a nicely structured site with icons and lots of content. The worst thing is the obnoxious blinking "UNDER CONSTRUCTION" and "COMING SOON" signs. —*KB*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

MovieLink 777FILM Online

http://www.777film.com/

MovieLink is a glimpse of the future, demonstrating how smoothly the Web can be integrated into daily life. If you are lucky enough to live in one of the included cities, show times and places are online. Select your city and neighborhood, then search what's playing by genre, title, or location. Some theaters even allow you to buy tickets online — with a credit card, though the transaction is insecure. This is a great use of the Web, one whose value will increase as more cities are added to the database. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Occasional Movie Reviews

http://www.fcs.net/maclark/

It's small, but the author has no qualms about this. On the front page, he states: "I write a review when I see a movie, and I see a movie when I feel like it. Low pressure, right?" The approximately 20 movie reviews here range from *Quiz Show* to *Howard's End*. They're well-written, and organized in the order in which the author saw them. The layout is also pretty nice. If you want a second opinion about a film, this might not be a bad place to check. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Teen Movie Critic

http://www.dreamagic.com/roger/teencritic.html

I initially reacted with horror to this page. Cute kid learns HTML, puts up some movie reviews, mom and dad are proud, his 14 (!) siblings are proud, and Roger Ebert enters the picture — a recipe for disaster. Imagine my consternation when I found myself agreeing with the kid's reviews — he can be sharp, articulate, and insightful. Admittedly, the cute factor is high here: Profiles of various siblings were particularly upsetting to my jaded sensibilities. Still, I'm comfortable recommending this site to anyone wanting to peek in on the life of a 16-year-old movie lover. I like this kid. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

The Film Festivals Server

http://cannes.zds.softway.worldnet.net/

Like fashion, film has inspired a year-long circuit of shows, reviews, and non-stop partying around the globe. This site gives the unwashed masses a chance to intercept the latest buzz. Was Martin's latest work previewed in London? Who took best of show in Moscow? Major film festivals are covered, nominees and awards listed, and city guides are provided to facilitate day-dreaming. Ahh, I remember Ghent — how soothing I found the Veldstraat. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Internet Movie Database at Mississippi US

http://www.msstate.edu/Movies/

This Mississippi State site really doesn't look very good, but that lends it an air of authority as an archive. I had some trouble at first using the search mechanism, but when I searched with less characters in my string, I was successful. You can search for a whole variety of cast/crew members, as well as by character.You can find out that Charles Laughton, Trevor Howard, and Anthony Hopkins all played Captain Bligh in *Mutiny on the Bounty* and *The Bounty*. But then you would have to know how to spell Bligh. —*KB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

The Official Grade B Productions TM Homepage

http://www.fsl.orst.edu/rogues/rosero/grade-b/grade-b.htm

This site's a bit sketchy. There are a few glitches — pages that might not load, some that aren't quite finished. But gads, the pages that *do* work and that *are* complete are well worth it. These kidz are cool, making films, writing their own scripts, playing all the parts themselves, and then exporting scenes and still clips (with captions) to the Internet. I can only assume they'll master HTML in time and get some super-great content up (maybe even by the time you read this.) Check it out! —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

The Super 8 Home Page

http://www.NeoSoft.com/users/b/billpenn/super8/

This page isn't very pretty or encyclopedic, but its creator clearly loves the Super 8 format. The buy-and-sell section is a nice feature, and the update index makes it simple to identify what's new and improved. If you're not already a Super 8 fan, this site won't convert you, but those already in the know could find this a useful gathering place. —*SS*

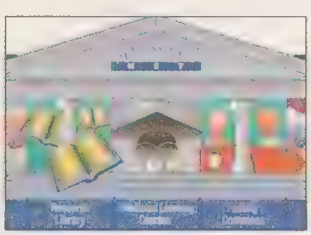
net rating: *overall:* **B**

education

AcademicNet Home Page

http://www.academic.com/

AcademicNet looks promising: nicely rendered image maps, plenty of places to click, a fancy registration system, and a statement that it is *the* resource for "educators interested in technology-mediated instruction and learning in higher education." Unfortunately, there's very little to see until you register, and not much after that. Many of the internal links were broken, and the stuff that was present was self-serving and written



There's little to see or read about at AcademicNet until you register.

in a dry, uninformative tone. Some of the collections of external links are worthwhile, though — if you can find them among the chaff. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **D+**

Carnegie Mellon University

http://www.cmu.edu/

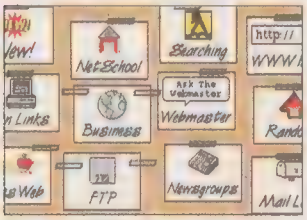
Carnegie Mellon has long bragged of its strong computer sciences department, and from this site's depth, it's clear that its pride is deserved. Interested in studying drama at CMU? Check out course descriptions, and even see when classes are meeting, thanks to some clever links to the registrar's office. Some improperly linked image maps marred the site's effectiveness, however. Whatever faults it has, though, Carnegie Mellon gets my praise for its Lycos program, one of the better free Web search tools. You can reach it through these pages or directly at http://lycos.com/. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Classroom Connect Educational Links

http://www.wentworth.com/classroom/edulinks.htm

This is primarily a site full of links, which can be useful, but if every site just had



Click on one of the papers "taped" to Classroom Connect's "bulletin board" to learn more about going to school on the net at this link-heavy "Jump Station" site.

links to other sites, the Web would be pretty empty. O.K., as a site focusing on educational links, Classroom Connect is pretty good, since it's packed, although some of the choices are a little bit odd. This may be due to a lack of focus. Is this a site for K12 students, educators, or parents? A link to "Pooh Corner" on the same page as a link to "British Poetry: 1780 to 1910" is a little bit questionable. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Harvard University WWW Home Page

http://www.harvard.edu/

At first, the Harvard University site looks pretty drab: a few choices linking you to ugly, text-only Gopher sites, phone numbers, historical information, rah-rah-rah. But underneath some of those links are profound pools. Take a gander at the map of Harvard, for example, which zooms in on any building in the university's expansive campus. Similarly, there's gold under some other links, including admissions and registration information. And Harvard's not too proud to include several links to one of its local competitors, M.I.T., in its "resources." —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Journal of Distance Education

gopher://gopher.acs.ohio-state.edu:70/11/Journals%20%26%20Newsletters/OSU%20Libraries%27%20Electronic%20Serials/Journal%20of%20Dist.%20Educ.%20%26%20Comm.

Although only a Gopher site, the Journal of Distance Education is an example of some of the great, free resources available on the Internet. The journal is published twice a year, and covers a topic that is shifting into high-gear because the Internet is making long-distance learning a lot more practical. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

LearnWorld Welcome Page

http://www.webcom.com/~larkin/LW/LWWelcomePage.html

LearnWorld is a great idea. Anybody who wants to can set up a course on a topic by outlining a series of texts to read, and including their own notes on their position on the topic. Anyone who would like to learn about the topic can use this as a course outline. Unfortunately, the LearnWorld pages focus too much on the list of texts, and don't have a structure for the course creator to guide the students through the texts. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Middle of Nowhere

http://gopher.gmu.edu/bcox/index.html

Middle of Nowhere is an experiment by Professor Brad Cox in building a site with depth on the Web, something he claims is an impossible task. Various thematically oriented sets of articles in the warehouse section of this site seem to prove him wrong. The themes focus on the Internet and current social issues. The site also has the online portions of classes Professor Cox teaches, so the unenrolled can follow along at home. The organization of the site leaves something to be desired. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

PUBLIC TEACH IN

http://www.peacenet.org/Teach-In/

Missed New York's International Forum on Globalization last November? Well, you can still take a trip to its Internet audio archives, which has four speeches given at that event. Unfortunately, that's it! There's no information about the teach-in itself or about the one coming up, nor are there links to groups and events with a similar weltanschauung. Make up for some of these lackings by visiting the site's parent directory, at http:// www.peacenet.org/. If you don't have the free RealAudio player, this site is completely pointless; download it at http://www.realaudio.com/. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Stanford University Home Page

http://www.stanford.edu/

Stanford University was one of the first sites on the Internet. Though it's no longer a leader in Internet connectivity, its WWW pages show it's kept abreast of the net's dynamic changes. The site's centerpiece is "Portfolio," which links Stanford's extensive but old-fashioned Gopher and FTP sites with a snazzy new Web interface — pretty clever! (This mixture of sources tends to make the content a bit uneven, however.) As with most university servers, there's a directory of student Web pages. Also find good links to info on getting around the South Bay/Silicon Valley area. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The EdWeb Home Room

http://edweb.cnidr.org:90/resource.cntnts.html

EdWeb comes off as uninspired. Most of the subject matter has to do with the use of technology in K12 education, which doesn't have to be such a dry subject. The articles on EdWeb have some good statistics you can throw

This site is best-suited to parents questioning whether their kids should get online.

around at cocktail parties, but they're so buried by banal design and endless text that most people will fall asleep before reaching them. This site is probably best-suited to parents who know nothing about the Internet and want to know whether it would be a good thing for their kids to learn to use. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The MIT Home Page

http://web.mit.edu/

To me, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology will always be known primarily for the witty pranks of technically minded students, but you'll have to dig hard to find that info here (try http://fishwrap.mit.edu/Hacks/Gallery.html instead). You will find just about everything else about MIT. For a bunch of geeks, though, it's rather pedestrian: no image maps or search engines worth mentioning, cryptic icons, and mostly just text. Be sure to check out the "fun stuff" area, which includes tips for hacking the campus security cards. Cool! Let's get user-friendly, folks! —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

The University of Michigan

http://www.umich.edu/

The University of Michigan has long been famous in the Internet community for its vast file archive site (find more info about this by going to http://www.umich.edu/~archive/). But there's more to U. Michigan than free software. Like, a top-ranked university! The site gives the usual information about its academic programs and such,

The U. of M. is respected in the net community for its vast file archive site.

beautifully linked and annotated via search engines, tables of contents, and clickable image maps. One coincidence makes the site aesthetically pleasing: U.M.'s logo blue matches the "unfollowed link" blue in Netscape's browser. Not to mention my eyes. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

The World Lecture Hall

http://wwwhost.cc.utexas.edu/world/lecture/

This is the ultimate Web resource for the independent student. Providing links to online course materials posted by universities all over America in subjects ranging from "accounting" to "zoology," the site lets students interested in self-study but not in relying on local college schedules get guidance on just about anything. Of course, lab work will be kind of difficult for the science courses, unless you happen to have a particularly well-equipped kitchen. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

UC Berkeley Home Page

http://www.berkeley.edu/

In a region known for compromise and reason, the University of California at Berkeley's Web pages are elegantly reasoned and make compromises so they're both user-friendly and fast. The contents can be accessed via nicely arranged text choices rather than by image maps, so the site is as useful to someone on a Unix box as on a Mac. The content is deep and varied, from the Naval Architecture school to the click-to-zoom-in campus map. If you're into general Web search engines, be sure to add Berkeley's "Inktomi" (http://inktomi.berkeley.edu/) to your list. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

VLC.Homepage

http://www.snowcrest.net/villcen/vlchp.html

The Village Learning Center bills itself as a new type of school that will "preserve and nurture the yearning for learning that everyone is born with." This doesn't explain why it became an online school, but the lack of accreditation might have something to do with it. A mere $1,195 buys a semester of work at home — e-mail assignments in course work for the seventh to ninth grade set. Use at your own risk. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

Washington University in St Louis

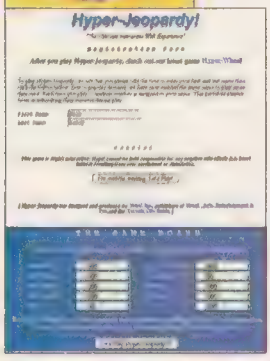
http://www.wustl.edu/

Washington University's Web pages have

Hyper-Trivia Challenge

http://www.hype.com/game_show/hyper.htm

Is it any wonder that one of the hottest Web games is based on one of the hottest TV game shows? Except in Hyper-Trivia Challenge, a Web version of "Jeopardy," everyone's a contestant, no one's a spectator. Actually, Hyper-Trivia Challenge has no affiliation with the TV show: You don't have to stress over time limits and having other contestants beat you to the button; you don't have to worry about looking like a fool to a nationwide TV audience; and you don't get to win a lot of real money. Well, maybe the TV show has an advantage on that last part.



It's a pretty simple set-up. The first screen asks you to register, which entails you entering a name that can be put in the Hall of Fame if you're smart enough. The next screen allows you to bet from $100 to $1,000 in each of 10 categories. From there, you're presented with the answers to which you have to figure out the questions. Most of these answers come from popular culture and aren't quite as intense as the stuff on the TV show. Once the results come in, you go to a Final Jeopardy kind of challenge, where you can bet everything you've previously won on a single question.

Hyper-Trivia Challenge's origins are typical of a lot of the Web. Originally, it was a "modest E-publication with local [Toronto] information and some quirky stuff," according to co-creator Greg Rubidge.

The maximum score possible on the game —20,000 — is achieved by betting the maximum on each question, getting all of the questions right, and betting everything on the final jeopardy challenge. Unfortunately, the game and my Achilles heel and I will never get a perfect score, because it always seems to include two sports questions. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rocket science content	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing , not great	Not stupid
Needs more content	A dog	Needs a brain

a clean, crisp organization and some useful features lacking at some of the larger sites. Want to check your e-mail? Click here. Want to do an Infoseek search without leaving university property? No problem. Add a bit of surreality to your visit by clicking on the "What's This?" button, which leads to a page of basic information about using the Web, site statistics, etc. So, even if they've never been to W.U., first-time users are already getting an education. Still, this handsome site lacks the content depth found at some other universities. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Web 66

http://web66.coled.umn.edu/

The mission of Web 66 is to provide resources to help K12 schools get on the Web. This may seem a questionable goal with all the hype about whether the Internet is a safe place for kids, but the Web master clears that right up by quoting headlines in his personal rants section that indicate how much more dangerous the outside world is for kids. Web 66 has instructions for educators to set up Web servers, and a very impressive list of K12 schools from around the world that are online. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Welcome to CNU ONLINE

http://cnuonline.cnu.edu/

Christopher Newport University, located in Virginia, is trying to push the envelope of modern education practice by offering a substantive number of classes online. It's even offering a degree in governmental administration through online course work. Unfortunately, the Web site is just a front for a Telnet gateway, and at least one of the Telnet addresses given on the Web site is wrong, which made it impossible to get course information. The Telnet gateway that I could get to run was so slow, it could turn a four-year degree into a six-year hassle. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

World Association for Family and Education WAFE

http://www.stria.ca/wafe/

WAFE's Web site is primarily a resource for the group to disseminate information on its conferences. Because WAFE is international, the Internet is probably a pretty good medium for it, saving it substantial amounts of money on printing and mailing costs. WAFE's mission statement, which is published on the site, is a little bit spacy, and seems pretty narrow-minded with its emphasis that "Marriage, the only proper context for full expression of the love between one man and one woman, is the rock upon which the family rests." —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

Yale University World Wide Web Front Door

http://www.cis.yale.edu/index.html

The Yale University site is everything the Harvard site isn't. Just kidding! Though, quite honestly, Yale's Web set-up beats its historical nemesis'. At the top level are listings for P.R. information, search engines, maps, academic department pages, student activities... Lots of stuff here. Thank god it's so well-organized! Running a search shows just how much there is: the word "racquetball" returned 10 pages, including news of the sports team, a description of the athletic facilities, and someone's experiments with the Connectix QuickCam, a video input device "about the size of a racquetball." Pretty good search engine, that! —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Diplomacy home page

http://www.infersys.com/diplomacy/

For those unfamiliar with *Diplomacy*, it's an ongoing game played over the Internet (primarily via e-mail), in which a network of players ally themselves with each other and attempt to take over the world. If you don't know more than that, expect to be a bit confused at the Diplomacy Home Page. Of course, if you're willing to endure the tedious text and insider's lingo, you may just be able to work your way into this mysterious society of players. If you're already a player, you owe it to yourself to visit this information-heavy site. —*PB*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

DoomGate

http://doomgate.cs.buffalo.edu/

This site is essentially a love letter to id, the maker of *DOOM* and the many *DOOM*-like games that have followed. The page is clean and easy to follow, much like the game, and if you're a fan, then it's a great place to visit with like-minded folks. If you're not a fan of the game, you simply have no place here. —*PB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

DOR-Cino: The Doronomo in Hartford Casino

http://www.linnet.com/~dkramarc/casino/casino.html

The Doronomo Casino has BlackJack, craps, roulette, a slot machine, and video poker, and you get $500 to play. It's all a pretty ingenious diversion, without all the noise and crowds of the Vegas casinos. The money is completely virtual, which is good, because the odds on the video poker game were really lousy. I ended up losing all my money at the roulette wheel. For those with high online time payments, I should point out that versions of these games are available as stand-alone software. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Mr DooM's Web Page

http://moose.erie.net/~mrdoom/

Mr. DOOM is exactly what you might expect — a *DOOM* fan through and

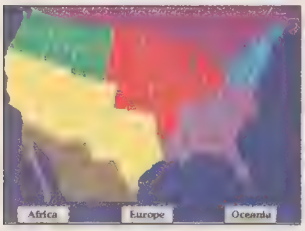
through, making himself known via the Internet. The idea behind his site is to essentially bring together other fan(atics) to talk about, read about, and dream about *DOOM*. There is also a personal challenge from Mr. DOOM to all players in what can only be described as a Death Match. If you think you're *DOOM*y enough, perhaps you'd like to give it a try. —*PB*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Paintball Field

http://abacus.bates.edu/~jburke/paintball/p-ball.html

A really superior amount of information on paintball games, tournaments, and



A clickable map lets you find paintball fields around the world.

equipment make this a great site for the novice to get hyped about playing. The site has a list of just about every paintball gun made, with more detailed information on a selection of them. The site is solidly constructed, but there's not much organization to it. The nicely done home page graphic is it for looks. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Paintball Field List

http://marge.phys.washington.edu/paintball/paint-fields.html

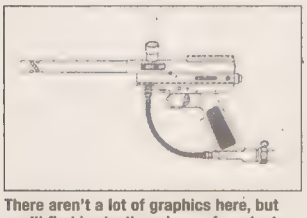
Did you know there are six paintball fields in Portugal? For the paintball fanatic on the move, this field list is an invaluable resource. Starting off with an image map of the U.S., it lets you click to listings of paintball fields by state. Or, the international set can look at what Europe and Oceania has to offer. Unfortunately, ease of navigability ends on the first page; everything below it is just text listings. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Paintball West Home Page

http://www.hooked.net/users/mbelew/home.html

This online paintball magazine includes product reviews, "expert" articles on such topics as how to anodize your gun, information for new players, and U.S. and international field listings. While there is a lot of useful, local text, there



There aren't a lot of graphics here, but you'll find in-depth reviews of products, like this Spyder marker, by Kingman International.

isn't much in the way of graphics or good design. The misspellings in the text also suggest the creator of the site is a, little too busy playing paintball to bother with editing. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Ravi's Paintball Page

http://www.sojourn.com/~rchopra/web/index.html

Ravi is a paintball fanatic. Ravi knows how to write a Web page. The two together make up for one intense paintball Web site. And, as opposed to a lot of other Web sites, the graphics are very nice. Ravi has a lot of equipment information on his page, which will probably have more appeal to experienced paintball gamers, and he also has a section for selling used equipment. Don't shoot me, Ravi, but I've got to say that your first page is too long. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Reinventing America Introduction

http://pathfinder.com/@@gphXyhEjlAMAQNVd/reinventing/

Loosely fitting the description of a game, *Reinventing America* is closer to a social experiment. The idea is to create a virtual America wherein anyone willing to play the (free) game will be able to answer surveys and generally voice opinions on real issues facing America. In the end, the "game" results will be tallied and presented to Congress in the form of a proposed reform act. Undoubtedly an exciting new way to play on the Web, *Reinventing America* is an important site for all those interested in saving the United States from certain doom. —*PB*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Streams and Brian Present Piercing Mildred

http://streams.com/pierce/

The beginning paragraph of the FAQ gives the most concise answer to what

The current cultural fascination with body piercing inspires this fun site.

this little online game is all about: "Borne of the 90s' two favorite pastimes — Body Modification and the Internet." Piercing Mildred is the perfect game for those of us who are entertained by the pierced multitudes walking the streets of America's cities. And you can win real prizes for the best piercing and scarification. Because of the continuing nature of the game, this can be a great once-a-week diversion. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Terminal Velocity Paintball Team

http://ntquest.wustl.edu/cgi-bin/www.exe?tv

The pages of this paintball team site list results from many paintball tournaments. These listings might be a little cryptic if you're not the betting type. Besides the team member profiles, which are a little spare, there's a decent selection of action photographs, which should give the paintball virgin some idea of what it's like, and reignite the passion of the initiated. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

The BTech Hangout

http://www.nada.kth.se/~d93-jbo/index.html

While this *BattleTech* (a futuristic role-playing game much like *Dungeons and Dragons* in space) site is less than thorough and even less than exciting in many ways, it's a reasonably good place for *BattleTech* fans to gather and discuss their *BattleTech* ways. If you're not yet familiar with the game, then prepare to be immersed in a futuristic world full of imaginative scenarios and in-depth fantasy game play. If you're already a participant, then say hello to some new friends. —*PB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Essential BTech3056 Resource

http://btech.netaxs.com/

This is the real deal. If you're into *BattleTech*, then you absolutely must visit this site. From individual faction news to lists of multiple *BattleTech* FTP and Web links, this site pretty much has it all for *BattleTech* players. If you're not already familiar with *BattleTech*, then you'll want to find out a little about the game before visiting this site, as it's definitely not for beginners. If you're already into the game, however, you're sure to find what you're looking for on this nicely organized and thorough page. —*PB*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

The Home of Virtua Fighter

http://www.digiweb.com/webm/vfhome/vfhome.htm

Whether you're already a *Virtua Fighter* expert or just getting into the game (phenomenon?), you will want to check out the Home of Virtua Fighter. Complete with move lists, FAQs, background info, and character art, this site's got it covered. Created by true *Virtua Fighter* fanatics, this is the quintessential *VF* and *VF2* site. Treated with the utmost respect, the *Virtua Fighter* legacy lives on in grand fashion at this site. —*PB*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

*** THE LABYRINTH ***

http://www.new3.com/labyrinth/

As Web mazes go, this one is well-constructed and fairly nice to look at. If capitalism gives you a rash, the prevalence of advertising might become an annoyance, but if you complete the maze in the least amount of moves, you could win a prize! Also, there is usually a choice of mazes to enter, and new mazes come online frequently. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

The Myst Hint Guide

http://www.astro.washington.edu/ingram/myst/index.html

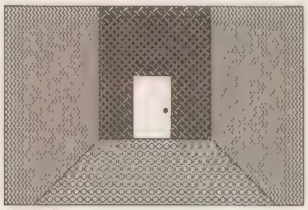
It's one of the biggest selling CD-ROM titles of all time, and for those of you who still have not experienced *MYST*, there is now a handy-dandy hint guide as close as the Web. Carefully handled so as to not give away too much of the game, the hints offer no more than they need to, and are definitely not as thorough as a walk-through. There is also a handy FAQ included on site, which answers questions about Broderbund (the game's publisher) and *MYST 2*, and contains other general *MYST* news. —*PB*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

The Web Maze

http://www.stewnet.com/Maze/StewsMaze.cgi

Brilliant programming, but what's the point? Well, there's advertising. This lit-



You'll find yourself wandering through an endless series of rooms like this at this site.

tle Web game has something like 147 rooms, and you choose which door you want to go through. I found myself just going in circles, but it would have been pretty easy to map. The creator of the maze, Stew, is offering advertising space on the wall of the maze, so if you get lost, you can always take a link out to an advertiser's site. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

Virtua Fighter II Page

http://aleph0.clarku.edu/~grace/vf2.html

There are certainly more thorough *VF2* pages, but this one isn't bad, and if you don't find the information you seek here, the list of links will surely lead you to the answers elsewhere. The most useful aspects of this page are the individual character FAQs and move lists. Overall, you're not likely to be blown away from this effort, but if *VF2* info and news is what you crave, it's not a bad place to start. —*PB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Welcome to Eddy's Video Game Home Page

http://neuromancer.hacks.arizona.edu/~eddyt/

This page is exactly what you might expect it to be. The host is a video game fanatic who's ready, willing, and eager

to share his video game info with the rest of the world. With everything from gaming gossip to screen shots from today's hottest games, this is a small but significant addition to the long list of video game sites on the Web. —*PB*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

health

Breakthroughs in Health and Fitness

http://www.wdn.com/mirkin/

Dr. Mirkin is one busy guy, what with his daily radio health tips, newsletter, video course, and fitness clinic. At his site, you can read his tips and search a file of articles on practical health matters ("Health Benefits in Food, Not Supplements"). There's a helpful link to lots of fat-free recipes for entrees, soups, and desserts. But wait, there's more: You can also order his videos, books, and his very own collection of spice blends for cooking. If he doctors as well as he markets, we're in good shape (or will be). —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Internet Athlete

http://www.athlete.com/

I'm afraid the Internet Athlete, "your worldwide source for athletic information," is down for the count. It's supposed to be a place where runners, swimmers, bikers, and triathletes find out about upcoming races and results, teams, features articles, and the inevitable products — but nothing is open past the top level. Worse yet, the latest date on the page is July 1995. Folks: We would gladly trade a nice clean home page for some gritty, useful information. You did it backwards, and we have no reason to visit. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **F**

The Good Health Web

http://www.social.com/health/index.html

The good folks at Good Health offer you a no-frills site, with a nice amount of well-organized information. You can link to newsgroups on illnesses and preventive health care, and health FAQs (AIDS, migraines, typing injury). There's a searchable database of a thousand health organizations, and a helpful clutch of health care mailing lists you can subscribe to. Best link of all is "Interesting Sites," which takes you to several government agencies (HHS, FDA, CDC) and other meta-pages. Good job, Good Health. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

The Weight Lifting Page

http://www.cs.unc.edu/~wilsonk/weights.html

Power lifting, Olympic weight training, hardgaining: this is an excellent place to get inspired — or at least be impressed by the passion of the Seriously Muscled. This well-organized site contains lots of links to e-mail lists and FAQs on exercising, training, the ever-challenging abdominal muscles, and more. You can find nutrition and diet info geared to the serious lifter, as well as many links for diet supplements, vitamins, and the

Peruse this site long enough — you may end up looking like this bodybuilder.

powdered food forms they favor. A few gyms have pages, and the personal pages feature lots of GIFs of major muscular magnitude. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

To Your Health

http://www.vitamin.com/

Dr. Art Ulene, who gained fame as the ever-calm and sensible doctor on "The Today Show," hosts a handsome page with good intentions, but there's very little there. For one thing, it hasn't been updated in months. The weight loss tips are, well, lame ("Go to the salad bar at a fast food restaurant... stretch a glass of wine by mixing in 50 percent seltzer to make a spritzer." Doesn't everyone already know this stuff?!). There are nutrition "strategies" that may be useful, but they're loaded with typos. Come on, Dr. Art — we thought we could trust you. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

humanities

Classics and Mediterranean Archaeology Home Page

http://rome.classics.lsa.umich.edu/welcome.html

It's appropriate that a site dedicated to the past is so stuck in it. Don't get me wrong: Someone did a terrific job of gathering far-flung Web links and centralizing them in a format handy to scholars. But in the end, it's just an extension of a Gopher site: text-based, with few helpful internal links or explanatory texts. User-friendly it ain't. Don't expect any commentary on which sites are worthwhile (or even appropriate to your needs). Still, content is more important than technical flash in academia, and this site is a wonderful portal to other resources. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Diogenes' Links to the Ancient World

http://www.snider.net/lyceum/

Diogenes, a cynical philosopher from Plato's time, used wit and humor to drive home his points. While this site has flashes of wit (e.g., calling Homer a "media correspondent for the gods"),

Manchester Institute for Popular Culture Website

SITE OF THE MONTH net MARCH 1996

manchester institute for POPULAR CULTURE on-line

Manchester could very well be the prototype for twenty-first century urban life. It exemplifies the regeneration of a derelict industrial city for post-industrial urban use. In the 1980s, British youth found its deserted warehouses the perfect places to host raves. While it's easy enough to dismiss raves as "all-night dance parties," the fact that the phrase "rave community" exists suggests that there was some minor social revolution going on. What better location for a think tank devoted to the study of popular culture? So, the existence of the Manchester Institute of Popular Culture (MIPC), based at the Manchester Metropolitan University, is no surprise. And, with the entry of the Web into the lexicon of popular culture, the MIPC would just have to have a Web site to have any kind of credibility as an authority on popular culture. According to Dan Hill, a research graduate at the MIPC, the medium of the Web amplifies the positive aspects of popular culture. Mr. Hill says the Web allows "artists to distribute their work via the net, bypassing the cultural industry infrastructure and the power structures of the art world." The technocracy of the Internet is a lot easier to negotiate with than the art buyers, gallery owners, and critics of the art world. One agenda of the MIPC, and of many cultural theorists worldwide, is the promotion of democracy. This does not refer to the political structure, but to the notion of every member of society having a voice. So, MIPC is working to ensure "that the new digital popular culture is not limited to the privileged minority who currently have access."

Fanatics! Football and Popular Culture in Europe

But the MIPC Web site is not just a forum for studying culture; it's a part of that culture. The funky design of the logo is more suggestive of modern graphic design than the title of a stodgy academic paper. One purpose of the site is to disseminate information on conferences sponsored by the MIPC. A recent one was titled "Fanatics! Football and Popular Culture in Europe," which is scheduled to coincide with the 1996 European Football Championship. A further example of the eroding delineation between critical studies and subject matter. —*WKC*

shouts from the street

Popular Culture, Creativity & Change

net rating: *overall:* **A**

the underlying values seem absent. The site is broken into five areas — Mesopotamia, the "Holy Land," ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Each area has a dozen links to others' sites, usually with a brief and caustic remark. The place looks nice, with a cool background and some good graphics, but they ultimately don't serve the site well. Maybe next time, Dio! —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

Egyptology Resources

http://www.newton.cam.ac.uk/egypt/

The *Indiana Jones* movies shattered the myth that archaeologists are stodgy and mildly eccentric old men; this site reminds us that their real community is living, thriving, and online. Community is a big selling point of this site: Besides offering the usual links to other sites, there are some bulletin boards, relevant news, and valuable resources, such as a German/Ancient Egyptian wordbook. The techno value is low: The main graphic is at too high a resolution and there are few features more complex than a standard link. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Literary and Critical Theory

http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/hypertext/landow/SSPCluster/theorists.html

This collection of mostly student essays seems very useful on the surface. It covers the greats of literary theory, such as Barthes, Baudrillard, Derrida, and Foucault, but the texts of the essays aren't online. It would be best used as a syllabus of important authors and could assist the independent scholar, or the student who wants to impress a professor with a little bit of name-dropping. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Modernism Timeline, 1890-1940

http://weber.u.washington.edu/~eckman/timeline.html

Electronically mediated educational interaction is commonplace nowadays, one example being this sparse site by an English professor, John Mark Eckman. His "Modernism Timeline," though, doesn't live up to the promise of today's medium. It's just a set of links — one link for each year — that leads you to pages listing nine or 10 events from the year. No commentary, no background, no graphics, no nuthin': Just "1919: R. P. Feynman born, Anderson: Winesburg, Ohio." C'mon, perfesser: You can do better. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **D-**

Objectivism

http://www.rpi.edu/~pierl/phil/objectivism.html

This site is a perfect example of an informational forum for an active philosophy. While references to and homage for Ayn Rand permeate the site, the focus is on the philosophy of Objectivism that she defined. Not sure what Objectivism is, or

The philosophy of Ayn Rand, founder of Objectivism, is dissected at this site.

if it's right for you? Read the FAQ located on this site. Linked resources include a newsgroup for the active discussion and debate of Objectivism. Curiously, the creator of the page has divided it into "good" and "evil" sections (other philosophies come under "evil"), which suggests a reading of Nietschze is in order. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Perseus Project Home Page

http://medusa.perseus.tufts.edu/

Many of us know about the Gutenberg Project, which mostly focuses on putting seminal Western texts of the last 200 years into electronic form. The Perseus Project is similar, but with a more esoteric bent: It's interested in the texts and images of archaic and classical Greece. Managed by a Tufts University professor, the site has heavy-duty corporate support and it shows: Its depth of study is amazing, and it's tied together with various search engines. The entire site is also being released as a four-CD set (!) by Yale University Press next year. That's a lot of stuff! —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Popular Culture Links

http://www.mcs.net/~zupko/popcult.htm

Popular culture has become fair game for academic analysis, allowing episodes of "Gilligan's Island" to merit the same amount of attention as Joyce's *Ulysses*. Sign of a bankrupt culture, or do academics just want to have fun? No matter, this page is a bunch of links to all sorts of popular culture resources, and the only reason it's mentioned here is because the design is so bad that the text can only be read by putting your face about two inches from the monitor. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Semiotics for Beginners

http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dgc/semiotic.html

Those who need a quick course on signs and signifiers for literary and cultural analysis, or anyone interested in a different critical tool, will find this quick and dirty explanation of semiotics very useful. A semiotic question: When you say Internet, are you referring to the global computer network, or the word that is our agreed-upon sign for the network? Roland Barthes was into it, so it should be good enough for you. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Welcome to Critical Mass

http://fas.sfu.ca/comm/c-mass/c-mass.html

Critical Mass calls itself a "Webzine of communications issues," and it delivers. The communications issues it focuses on are Internet-related, so if you want help talking to your children, this isn't really the place to go. It's published monthly during the academic year, and the issues seem to be generally theme-based. For example, Issue Two of Volume Two dealt with government on the Internet. It should be noted that this is a Canadian publication and has that great, white north slant. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

World War II Archive

http://192.253.114.31/D-Day/GVPT_stuff/new.html

Boy, this site is well done. Lots of internal links leading to historical text documents, sounds, and movies in your choice of format. But it's a bit sinister: though it appears to offer a complete picture of the war, nothing could be further from the truth. The server is a propaganda site for our military in Europe, plain and simple. It shows only American good works (sidestepping some of our hideous wartime abuses), and is paid for and developed by Army brats on your tax dollars. Remember this next time Congress cuts funding to school lunch programs. Enjoy the site! —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Gays & Lesbians on World Wide Web

http://www.glowww.com/

Warning: As you browse GLOWWW, the word "lame" may spring to mind. The page is a virtual card pack including (non-working) buttons to a travel newsletter, video, and catalogs catering to lesbians and gay men. There's an area for guest comments (none visible so far), and numerous promises about what will appear in the future — November, that is. (Which year? We don't know.) Odder still, there's a reference to a bimonthly e-mail newsletter. (Yes, bimonthly. Via e-mail). There are a number of fun and useful lesbian and gay sites; GLOWWW is not one of them. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

Guide To Vegetarianism

http://www.veg.org/Vegetarian/Guide/

Like a bowl of lentil soup, this guide is plain but nourishing. There are layers of info and listings by continent and outlet (organizations, newsletters, newsgroups, restaurants), as well as a state-by-state list of resources. An amusing and possibly useful page is the list of fast-food chain eateries itemizing menu items that will pass muster with the traditional vegetarian and the more abstemious vegan. There's a helpful mail-order area of companies offering special foods and cooking utensils. You can also send in a form to add your own veggie picks to their list. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

IT'S A GREAT DAY AT AVEDA

http://www.aveda.com/

Aromatherapy, organic cosmetics, hair and skin care are Aveda's bag, and you can read here about oils and essences from Amyris to Ylang Ylang. (An "information forthcoming" tag is a little too

Aveda's Herbarium section offers tips on how to "release the beneficial power of plants for your health and well-being."

prominent, but plain text on a respectable list of these essences is already in place.) There's a glossary of terms from the sometimes arcane world of aromatherapy and Ayurvedic treatments, links to Aveda workshops and products, a zine, and good page of related links. Handsome and spare, Aveda's site may spur you on to that organic facial. Hey, it can't hurt. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Unofficial Cyberpunk Home Page

http://205.230.70.201/cyberpunk/index.m.html

O.K., here's our multiple choice question. Cyberpunk is: a literary genre, a visual style, an attitude, a dessert topping. (That's right, it's all of the above.) A true Cyberpunk page would *have* to be "unofficial," and this one is a helpful start for the sociologist or punker wannabe. There's a biblio of revered authors, from the sainted William Gibson to lesser lights, a hotlist of "CyberCulture" magazines and newsgroups, and links to other cyberpunk sites. Still under construction are the games and movie pages, which will help to round out the site. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Welcome to Fashion Net

http://www.fashion.net/

At ease, fashion mavens — your site is at hand! Fashion Net offers a consumer area with a good list of links to fashion and style mags, entertainment sites, and yes, shopping sites aplenty. These are conveniently organized by item (jewelry, clothing, accessories, and cosmetics, and, of course, Internet malls). There's even a link to mail order catalogs for the insatiable among us (and speaking of insatiable, a faster modem would help, what with viewing all of those catalog graphics). This is a good starting point for anyone who regularly heeds the call of the magic plastic. —*KW*

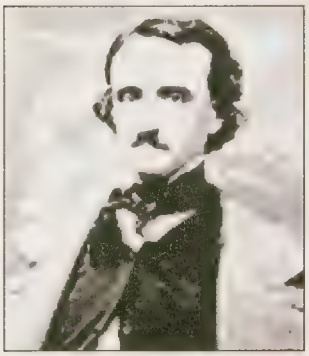
net rating: *overall:* **B**

literature

The Complete Shawian
http://metro.turnpike.net/T/tehart/index.html
I was excited by the prospect of a Shaw home page. "Wow," I thought, "the old crank online!" As I quickly discovered, though there are Shaw repositories out there, this is not one of them. This Web space is devoted to its creator's scholarly analysis of Shaw. A few essays and a Master's thesis are present, as is a novel by the page owner. Those interested in critical readings of G.B. Shaw might take an interest in this site; those wanting the undistilled spirit should try a Web search. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Edgar Allan Poe's House of Usher
http://infoweb.magi.com/~forrest/index.html
If you're not familiar with the work of Edgar Allan Poe, you must immediately acquaint yourself with it. Poe fans will greet this Web space with joy; it's a fine example of what a fan site should be:



The visage and spirit of Edgar Allen Poe haunt this excellent site.

the complete works of Poe, biographies, filmographies(!), discographies(!!), and more. Well-organized, cleverly presented, engaging — I can find nothing to complain about here. A great deal of time was obviously spent putting these pages together, and I encourage everyone to pay a visit, if only to view the Web at its best. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **A+**

An Index of Poets
http://library.utoronto.ca/www/utel/rp/indexauthors.html
This is an electronic version of the *Representative Poetry* anthology published by the U. of Toronto press. The medieval to early twentieth century period is covered, with several poems each from 98 poets. The Romantics make a good showing, as do the usual suspects: Johnson and Jonson, Pope and Swift, Milton and, of course, Bill S. A straightforward and uninspiring interface allows untroubled browsing. This page is pleasant enough to visit, and it succeeds in its modest task as an online version of the anthology. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Internet Poetry Archive
http://sunsite.unc.edu/dykki/poetry/home.html
This very well-constructed and tastefully designed site features the work of living poets. Living poets are a rare breed, and should probably be on the endangered species list. I'm sure this is why the site only had three of them (when I visited). Besides the sheer novelty of discovering living poets, visitors to the site can sample audio clips of the poets reading their poems. Somebody realized poetry is meant to come in through the ear, and not the eye. Will wonders never cease? —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Keats John 1884 Poetical Works
http://www.cc.columbia.edu/acis/bartleby/keats/index.html
This site is a component of the Project Bartleby work at Columbia University, which is making selected texts available on the Web. Keats' collected poems are here, especially troublesome terms are annotated via hyperlink, and a first-line index is provided. A no-frills design makes it easy to find that beloved poem in ready-to-cut-and-paste format. Project Bartleby is a must-have bookmark for any reader. I cannot praise its efforts enough. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

LIVING POETS
http://dougal.derby.ac.uk:80/

The Wild Wilde Web Welcome

http://www.clients.anomtec.com/oscarwilde/

SITE OF THE MONTH net MARCH 1996

To be natural is such a very difficult pose to keep up."
— Oscar Wilde

A poet in the nineteenth century could not be successful by holing up in a garret and writing madly. A social dimension was required. Wit was required. A really good poet had to be able to show up at a party and say something, at least one sentence, that would be so very clever as to be repeated by more than one person, thereby assuring the poet's reputation. In the twentieth century, wit was practiced by Dorothy Parker and the members of the Algonquin Round Table, but in recent times, wit seems to have fallen in disfavor.

Oscar Wilde was a master of wit, which is the focus of Michael Tidmus' Wild Wilde Web. Originally, Michael was just going to put a page on the Web of Wilde's witticisms, but he decided that there had to be some kind of contextualization, so the site expanded to include a biography, a list of Wilde's works, other people's quotes about Wilde, and links to Wilde-related sites on the Web. The material on the Web site was salvaged from an exhibit Mr. Tidmus had taken part in called "Serious Games: Interactive Images." He chose to create an interactive piece about Wilde, using the paradigm of a Victorian parlor game. Some time later, he was asked to be "the participating American artist in ArtAIDS (**http://artaids.dcs.qmw.ac.uk:8001**) — a project of AIDS-related images that went online on World AIDS Day, 1994." This introduction to HTML gave him the expertise to program the Wilde site.

The graphics on the site are particularly exceptional, which is no wonder, since Mr. Tidmus has been a graphic designer since 1984. He says he "spent seven years freelancing Apple Computer's advertising graphics for BBDO and Chiat-Day."

One of the most extensive areas on the site, and probably the most useful, is the bibliography section — a list of books about, or with references to, Wilde.

The only drawback is that these books should probably have been linked to some other online reference that provides further information about them. When I asked Mr. Tidmus what Wilde might have thought about the Web (a question I acknowledge is pretty stupid), he kindly replied, "I think Oscar would have applauded the accessibility of knowledge and deplored the lack of beauty inherent in much Web design." —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing , not great	Not stupid
Needs more content	A dog	Needs a brain

lpoets/
This site introduces itself as "The home of Powerful New Poetry," and a manifesto is offered for your reading pleasure. I hate pompous overstatement, and I believe that manifestos and art are incompatible, so I must admit to an initial negative reaction. A slick interface — much more attractive than most e-zines — gives access to well over 100K of poems. Most of them are awful, of course, but I came across a few that really work. The site looks good, and there's a large body of work to examine. I suppose I can forgive them their excesses. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

The Milton-L Home Page

http://www.urich.edu/~creamer/milton1.html
How many lives have been ruined by "Paradise Lost"? How many otherwise educated people have lowered their heads in shame, forced to confess that they were bored to tears by this poem?

Lovers of "Paradise Lost" should click over to this link-heavy site.

Those individuals who do find pleasure in Milton will delight in this site. Links are provided to Milton's prose and poetry, info on the Milton listserv is available, and scholarly articles are online for perusal. The site aims to be — and is — a comprehensive resource for the wide-eyed believer seeking Milton news on the net. Only the lack of centerfold GIFs might disappoint the Milton fan. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Shelley Percy Bysshe

http://www.cc.columbia.edu/acis/bartleby/shelley/index.html
The Romantic poets seem a bit unseemly to the jaded youth of today. Passion? A burning obsession to draw forth the secrets at the heart of being? No thanks; the opening band is just about to take the stage. This site is another element of the Project Bartleby efforts to put classic literature online. Not all of Shelley's works are in place yet, but a few of the major texts and plays are already available. If you need a Shelley fix in electronic format, it just might be here. Those researching the man should go elsewhere, though there is a biographical sketch. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Spenser Web: The Shepheardes Calender

http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~jntolva/shepcal.html
The beauty of this site is that it shows how the Web can really enhance literary

Annotation of Spenser's Shepheardes Calendar is a highlight of this site.

studies. Each page of Spenser's Shepheardes Calender can be viewed in one of four different versions, including a scanned copy of the original printing. To name the site "The Spenser Web" is a little bit misleading, however, since it only has the one work. Also, getting through the first couple of pages is a little annoying, since the links are hidden at the very bottom of the pages. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Turkish Poetry Home Page

http://www.cs.umd.edu/~sibel/poetry/poetry.html
Often, late at night, I find myself in a panic. The world is simply too big, and I will never know more than the smallest portion of it. This page did nothing to allay my fears. Poetry — in Turkey? It seems I've managed to pass a lifetime without giving any real thought to the possibility. A wide selection of Turkish poetry is presented in the original and in English. Numerous scholarly works assist the reader in placing the poetry in context, and the simple layout does not interfere with efforts to explore the site. A pleasant curiosity for any lover of words. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Vergil's Home Page

http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~joef/vergil/home.html
Latin fans will find this page quite a treat, since most of the on-location texts by Vergil are in the original. For all of us translation wimps, there are links to English versions of the Aeneid and the Georgics. While the page is tastefully designed, it isn't very well-organized. Its plethora of links, such as texts, bibliography, pictures, and related articles, are all just thrown together on one page. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Virtual Henry

http://sec-look.uiowa.edu/henry/preface.html
Ah, the play made from the movie by Kenneth Brannagh, or was it Mel Gibson? Anyway, something like that. The full text of "Henry V" is here, which should be enough in itself, but we are also demonstrating the powers of HTML. The text is annotated with hyperlinks, which is brilliant, and not only do the annotations have text, they also have pictures, so you can see, for example, what Henry V's father looked like. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

WWW POET'S PARK

http://www.soos.com/poetpark/
Most poetry is bad. Most literature is bad, for that matter, but the rewards of the well-written poem or story are so great that one endures the dreck. Poet's Park is an online literary journal. By the previous rule, it's the case that most of its contents are mediocre at best. The attractive layout and pleasing design make the bad writing endurable, though, and further one's enjoyment of the worthwhile — which is hiding in there, by the way. Handy "mail to" links allow almost effortless feedback to the writers. This small e-zine is worth a visit. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

music

Andrew Lloyd Webber Online

http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~smfriedm/alw.html
You can't walk 10 feet out of Times Square without bumping into one of Andrew Lloyd Webber's long-running Broadway hits, like "Cats," or "Phantom of the Opera." Comprehensive and nicely organized, this fan-oriented page will point you to other Internet resources containing biographical data, show lyrics, tour dates, places to book tickets, and even a script to "Sunset Boulevard" translated into Dutch. The "Phantom" MIDI file I downloaded set the appropriate mood and, as a bonus, woke up the baby who has the misfortune of living next door to me. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Bikini Kill

http://www.columbia.edu/~rli3/music_html/bikini_kill/bikini.html
I must rave about this site's adorable riot grrrl qualities, the darling photos of Tobi, Kathi, and Kathleen, and the grrrl manifesto.The little hearts on a string graphic is super-rad as well. Gossip, discography, sound clips, and cool girl links lace this

See the members and learn about the Kathleen Hanna-Courtney Love scandal.

Bikini Kill (grrrl rock non-stars) tribute page with style and thoroughness. It's super-duper fresh. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Internet Music Review Service Main Page

http://www.monsterbit.com/IMRS/
Here's another place to check if you're not sure what to add to your music collection. The graphics are nice enough and the organization is handled well, considering how much information is stored here. Search for bands you may have heard of, and read what others have to say, or browse through the "what's new" section to get some fresh ideas. It's got one of those dastardly little "Point Top 5% of the Web" logos on it, so it's apparent that others have also found this site useful. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

IUMA

http://www.iuma.com/
Each band in the Internet Underground Music Archives has an entire MPEG-encoded song you can download for free. What a great idea. Cruddy modem users, fear not! They also publish a low-bandwidth version with smaller graphics and have smaller sound samples, too. Requisite photos, bios, lyrics, and lugubrious press releases fill out the rest of each performer's area. Easy-to-use search tools lead you directly to the

The IUMA site could revolutionize the way new music is distributed.

genre or band you want to hear. And if you have the cash, you can even publish your own song. Something like this service will be the future of music distribution. —*MP*

net rating: overall: **A-**

Pat Benatar Online Fan Club Home Page Unofficial

http://www.southwind.net/~jcross/benatar/
Pat Benatar, Queen of Rock, has been belting out hits since the late 70s, winning four Grammies in the process. This shrine lets you see her high school yearbook photo, read her bio, follow her touring schedule, and find out what the media has to say about her summer tour with REO Speedwagon and Fleetwood Mac. The real treat, though, is to read what the fans themselves have to say. Their love is no battlefield. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Richard Wagner Archive

http://www.utu.fi/~hansalmi/wagner/
Wagner, underscorer of weddings and formal gala events, is alive and well in cyberspace. Though this site tries one's patience with its slow server and too-heavy graphics, it's well-informed and thorough. Quotations, critical essays, a biography, and a complete discography provide this site with the necessary components of any "fan page." If you can wait for the pages to load (hint — turn off the auto-load images on your browser), it's worth it. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

VIBEonline

http://pathfinder.com/@@rOPfiIGGhAMAQHte/vibe/VibeOnline!.html

What makes the VIBE site the music Site of the Month? Could it be the ultra-amazing graphics? Maybe it's the astonishing amount of original content, updated on a weekly basis. Or, maybe it's the level of interactivity the site initiates, with live chats and reader surveys (on both serious political issues and just-fer-fun follies). No, no, maybe it's the diversity of subject matter. Though mainly musical, VIBE touches on all aspects of entertainment; movies, video and literature. O.K., no, I get it, it's definitely the quality of the reviews section, with a specifically hot Web-site-of-the week review — a thorough walk-through of a great online creation. Hmm. Yes. Yes! YES! It is all of these things. In a word (or two), VIBE ROCKS!

It's a fantastic companion to the paper version. In fact, one would have to wonder (less the coffee table status quo reasons): Why buy the paper version at all? Everything you could ever want to know about the VIBE world of rhythm, blues, rap, and traditionally African-American entertainment is wrapped up in a snazzy, I mean super-snazzy, hypertexted format, whenever you want it — for free!

Technically, they pull off some nice stunts. The image maps are beautiful, but not server-bogging.

The tables are aligned perfectly (no matter what size your browser is set to). The colors and fonts all work especially well with the overall design (kudos to the artists.) And the CGI scripts (for all that interactive stuff) run superbly. This is no small feat, mind you.

I reviewed the December issue of VIBE, where I found an outstanding article about the history of black super-heroes (in chronological order complete with cool graphics). The reader survey opinion poll chose the controversial topic of abortion (with a nonpartisan non-bias): Are you pro-life or pro-choice (and why)? And, of course, the feature stories revolved around the year in hip hop, with comprehensive coverage of all the chart stoppers and flavors of the 1995 season — Mariah Carey, Notorius B.I.G., Tupac Shakur, and Adina Howard, to name a few. And there's a compelling interview with anti-rap activist and proclaimed feminist Delores Tucker. (I'd suggest a look at the back issues if you missed this one.) Overall, I find it difficult to understand how anyone wouldn't like this site, even if VIBE isn't your chosen music scene. It's everything a good Web magazine should be, and more. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* ***A***

Though there's lots of stuff in it, Rockweb lacks soul.

Rockweb TM Interactive

http://www.rockweb.com/

Rockweb has a lot of stuff in it. The good things include the "House of Boo" (a decent rock zine), Web-based chat rooms dedicated to different bands, some cool graphics, and a moderate collection of RealAudio interviews and songs. The rest of the site feels like a publicist's wet-dream. Filled with dry, corporate propaganda, tons of bandwidth-hogging promo pictures, and hardly any sound samples, Rockweb lacks soul, and offers no easy way to navigate. It's all flash, and no rock. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* ***C+***

RootsWorld Music On The Net

http://www.rootsworld.com/rw/

From flute music of the Andes to Mexican polka, RootsWorld is a one-stop shop for information on world music. Extensive artist catalogs, music reviews, recommendations, and many magazine features on the world music scene shape RootsWorld. While the graphics are generally good (I like all the accordions), it does not have many sound samples, nor an easy way to navigate this large site. Still, RootsWorld is fun to browse. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* ***B+***

The CRYPT

http://www.henge.com/~stooge/

White Zombie has been rockin' for 10 years, but only recently has the group broken into the mainstream. Old and new fans can follow satanically inspired image maps to band photos, bios, video, sound clips, and a complete discography. The cool cartoony graphics set an edgy tone, and can be easily navigated around by low-bandwidth users. Although the site has lots of good info and looks cool, it feels empty. The fan presence is here but not felt (the letters section was removed due to lack of disk space). —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* ***B+***

The George and Ira Gershwin Homepage

http://www.sju.edu/~bs065903/gershwin/homepage.htm

For the Gershwin fan, this is the creme de la creme. It's a full-on archive that must have taken quite a lot of time to

This archive photo of Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire in "Shall We Dance" is among the offerings of this site.

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	*A visual 10!*	*Rocket science material*
Fair amount of content	*Appealing , not great*	*Not stupid*
Needs more content	*A dog*	*Needs a brain*

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research (I'm suspecting years of enthusiastic pursuit). Though I am no Gershwin expert, the bundle seems complete, with a listing of plays, film scores, and behemoth discography, all in glowing hypertext format. Plentiful in details and trivia, it even includes some reviews written by the site creator. And, of course, you'll find the ubiquitous link page of other Gershwin related sites. Bravo. —*LS*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

The Indian Scene Page

http://www.interlog.com/~nverdi/bhangra.html

India has long been a culture rich with music. Unfortunately, this site is not too

For Indian music lovers, the best thing about this site are the top-10 Bhangra charts. But it's a bit sparse otherwise.

rich in either content or aesthetics. It takes a stab at informing the curious net surfer about concert events around the world and new Indian music releases, but it's missing a lot. But, the top-10 Bhangra charts are nice. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

The Ultimate Band List

http://american.recordings.com/wwwofmusic/ubl/ubl.shtml

What the Ultimate Band List lacks in visual slickness is more than made up for in true functionality. Want to know something about your favorite band? Use the handy search tools to find a band's listing of links to related newsgroups, mail lists, related Web pages, sites with lyrics, song files, and even guitar tabs for the budding musician! You can even add links to material yourself. This isn't publicity-inspired hype, but a real tool. The only problem I encountered was that many promising links turned out to be dead ends. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Welcome to Agents, Inc. Firefly

http://www.agents-inc.com/

Ever spent too much time waiting to hear the latest CD at a record store listening booth, only to be disappointed? Firefly can help. It's an intelligent agent of sorts designed to categorize your music tastes, then spew recommendations of other artists you might like. You're given a list of bands to rate according to what you already know of them, and Firefly stores that in a mega-database. It then searches the database for other people who've entered similar interests, and recommends potential new music for you. It's ingenious and surprisingly accurate. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Welcome to JAZZ Online

http://www.jazzonln.com/JAZZ/

This is a GREAT site. It starts with a smashing BANG of colorful graphics, then shoots to an outstanding table of contents. Reviews, news, catalogs, and links line the pages and yikes, you could even register to win a Gibson guitar. (That's enough to lure me in...) Did I mention the online live chat rooms, interviews, and intelligent feature articles? Yes, it's a définite winner. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A+**

Welcome to the Metaverse

http://metaverse.com/

Go, Adam Curry! Though I'm tempted to slight this site on the premise that Adam Curry is a dweeb, it's really a well-designed, thoughtful, comprehensive look at the music industry. Metaverse uses the technology well, and has pages and pages and pages of industry news, gossip (the infamous Sleeze Report), reviews, events, and so on.... And while the site sports advertising, it's for the

All the music industry gossip can be discovered at Adam Curry's Metaverse site.

most part tasteful and unobtrusive. A great site for most modern (alternative, pop, punk, funk, etc.) music fans. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

pastimes

Airheads Beemer Club

http://www.vni.net/~mcl/ahs/airheads.htm

Airheads are folksy BMW motorcycle enthusiasts who despise their chi-chi yuppie counterparts, and — now this is key — *ride Beemers with air-cooled heads.* A photo gallery introduces you to all the fellas. Sure, we're talking guys who most likely attended the Skynyrd reunion tour, but goddamn if they couldn't clean serious BMW house with a few pony kegs of Pabst down their gullets. All in all, this page rocks with invaluable technical data on how to tangle with a *real man's* bike. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

The CraftWeb Home Page

http://www.craftweb.com

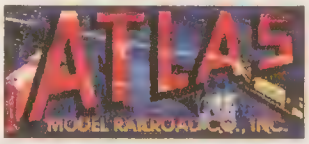
It claims to be "The Premier OnLine Community for Professional Craft Arts," and it lives up to the boast. A stained-glass window links artisans, groups, FTP files, a bookstore, resources, and more. The people behind the page will also promote your work, for a price — $250 gets you membership, an attractive site to display photos of wares with a bio (they'll assist in designing), plus other promotional benefits. A hundred bucks yields lesser services, and no money will still easily provide you with a wealth of information, whether you're a wood turner, basket weaver, or gourd artist. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Grand Central Railway Station of Cyberspace

http://tucson.com/concor/

This is nirvana for the hopelessly train-obsessed. Everything anyone could possibly need or want to know about trains is here, including hundreds of links to pages covering real and model railroads. There are listings of manufacturers and suppliers, clubs, magazines, shows, his-



The Atlas Model Railroad Co. is just one of a dozen manufacturers featured at the Grand Central Railway Station site.

torical societies, e-mail lists, chat sites, and forums. The word "exhaustive" comes to mind. Arguably the best feature: You can have your own Web page within the Grand Central Station. And, should you extricate yourself from this site, you can make your real-life train reservations from the link to Amtrak's site (http://www.amtrak.com). —*LG*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Home Fashion Information Network

http://www.thehome.com/

Homeowners will want to visit the Home Fashion Information Network for lots of useful information about, umm, fashion and your home. There's a lot of depth to this site. Topics include everything from decorative accessories to window and wall coverings. But be warned: You have to wade through tons of bad writing that includes scary phrases like "the versatility of solids" and "creating a cozy haven." Don't let that keep you away, though, as the section called "Wood You Like To Know" (ugh) contains a great chart that makes the visit worthwhile. —*LG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

HOn2-1/2 Page

http://www.shore.net/~jdf/ho30.html

If I glean what hosts Dave Frary and Bob Hayden say, HOn2-1/2 is a slightly obscure scale for trainsters who shun conventional HO or N sizes. This is akin to intellectuals who never read anything even remotely popular and get snotty if you ask why, except that Dave and Bob sound like nice guys and model trains are lots more fun than books by sullen junkie writers. Anyway, if you're interested in HOn2-1/2 or think you might be, Bob and Dave have all the information you need, and they want to hear from you. They're thinking of writing a book. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

JON ZIMMERS HOME PAGE

http://www.teleport.com/~jonz/

Tools. That's what Jon's into. He buys, sells, studies, touts. These aren't your usual tools, though. No, Jon's partial to beautiful 'n' rare tools, like unusual cast iron levels, machinist's tools, and parts. Although the site isn't super-attractive, he includes lots of photos and plenty of text/links to give you a good understanding of his obsession. Should you be interested in dropping some serious cash, Jon's selling. Take a look at the super-glam Stanley No.1. At just 5-3/4 inches long, this is the smallest bench plane made. A steal at just $1,295. —*LG*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Mike Sullivan's WOOD-WORKING WEB PAGE

http://access.digex.com/~mds/woodwork.html

When you're talking about woodworking, you're talking about a *real* hobby — traditional, folksy, and just plain Rockwellian. This site is tireless in its exploration of a subject that requires meticulous attention to detail. With links to FAQs, bibliographies, and subjects headers like "All you need to know about scrapers," you'll be well on your way to building that birdhouse for the front porch. Just one drawback: Where's the art? —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Mini-Tugboat Homepage

http://www.halcyon.com/aslocke/welcome.html

Would you like to learn more about mini-tugboats? Would you like to *build* a mini-tugboat? You might if it helped you

gain access to the Gulf Coast Nudist Yacht Club! That's right, friends, you'll find naked seamen and seawomen if you delve deeply enough into this otherwise unspectacular homage to mini-tugboating. How-to articles are well-written, but most of the accompanying photos are too low-res to be of any help. While the site seems to be a comprehensive resource for tugboating info, its organization is labored. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Minnesota Clay Co. USA

http://www.mm.com/mnclayus/

"It can be surprising when a glaze described as a matt taupe fires out as a glassy emerald!" Indeed. I have no idea why this is so, but I believe these people. They talk about glazes, cones, and kilns like it was their first language. Aside from a catalog of Minnesota Clay products, this page has interesting links to discussion groups, which often include topics such as left-handed throwing and the best books on tape to break the workroom monotony. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Model Railroad Information

http://www.arc.umn.edu/~wes/model/model.html

This is the mother of all model railroad sites (and there are a boxcar full). Not real pretty, but it's stuffed with information and it's easy to get around in. General info, sites by scale and gauge, FAQ, organizations, electronics, building models, exchange tips, etc. If it's small and train-related, it's here. If it isn't, let them know and I'll bet they'll add it pronto. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **A+**

MOTORCYCLE ONLINE

http://www.motorcycle.com/motorcycle.html

Consider this site your premiere online motorcycle authority. Layouts are so sharp, they compare to print magazines

Sharp graphics and a good layout make the Motorcycle Online *the* authority for biker fanatics.

before the advent of desktop publishing. Tables display tech specs of various bikes. Ads are benignly sequestered in "Manufacturer's Row." Loaded with extensive photography and all the trappings of a modern hobbyist's magazine (feature stories, product reviews, classified, etc.), you'd be hard-pressed to find a more well-written, well-designed source of motorcycle information. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **A+**

Pottery: The Potter's Page

http://www.aztec.co.za/users/theo/

An argument could be made that the page name is redundant, but why pick nits? Bountiful and accessible resources include a mailing list, software, exhibitions, and events, plus connection to potters all over cyberworld. Very basic layout with a minimum of colors, but so what? You want information or glitz? If you work with clay, you want to be here. And if you cover your mouse and keyboard with plastic, you don't have to wash your hands first. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

SC VAMPIRES M & SC Homepage

http://www.tower.org/vamp/

Originally founded in the 1940s, the Vampires was a motorcycle-only club that now includes "rugged hard-riding scooter enthusiasts." Its site, still under construction when I visited, promises to be one swank stop for anyone into riding. It features great pictures of bikes, plus sections devoted to various manu-

Stay in touch with the latest hard-riding scooters and motorcycles at this site.

facturers and models. Interested in purchasing an historical model? You can link up to Christie's to see what's on the auction block. In the Santa Cruz area? Check the site for information on joining the group for a ride. But, as they caution, "be prepared for a sore butt." —*LG*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Tiles on the Web

http://users.aimnet.com:8000/%7Etcolson/webtiles.htm

Your one-stop site for everything in Tileland. Look at tiles, discover where to get training, check out the bookshelf, critique the featured tile artist. This attractive site is a labor of love for host Tom Colson and his knowledgeable contributors. It's strictly non-commercial, which doesn't mean he won't mention a worthy business, but it does mean Tom's endorsement can't be bought. It's a complete service for those who, in his words,

This graphic is the unifying element to this collection of tile info and links.

"are into tile." If you are, too, you need this page. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Welcome to the LA Biker home page

http://www.labiker.org/

Insipid, inane, incomprehensible that anyone would want to go to this site. My dog could create a better biker page — and he doesn't know HTML or ride a motorcycle. A disparate collection of vanity pages, this site is mediocre in every respect: kinda sexist, kinda vain, kinda into machines. I either want good old testosteronic, beer-guzzling, and hardcore, or something totally unexpected like progressive, enlightened, and free-thinking. The only reason to visit this site: the Fredo page by Praka. If this man is single, someone must pick him up — he's into Italian, opera, and Perl. What's he doing with this crowd? —*LG*

net rating: *overall:* **D+**

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	*A visual 10!*	*Rocket science material*
Fair amount of content	*Appealing, not great*	*Not stupid*
Needs more content	*A dog*	*Needs a brain*

politics

Amnesty International

http://www.io.org/amnesty/overview.html

Amnesty International's online site makes it easier than ever for people to advocate freeing political prisoners. The site lists hundreds of Urgent Action notices and studies of prisoners of conscience, and allows you to write your letters by e-mail. It also contains a huge collection of human rights records and trends in particular countries. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Constitution Action Party

http://www2.ari.net/home/CAP/

Calling itself the "majority party for the 21st century," CAP opposes what both the Democrats and Republicans are doing, and makes no bones about it.

The right-wing "constitutional purists" behind this page condemn both Democrats and Republicans, and advocate a return to the simpler days of Jefferson and Monroe. Via sarcastic (and sometimes entertaining) missives, they defend the supreme authority of a Christian god, attack gay rights, and condemn what they consider to be illegal taxation of the electorate. They temper their platform with criticism of racism and militarism, and suggest that the voter revolt of 1994 was misidentified as a Republican endorsement. The site is easily navigated, though artistically flat. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

GOP In-Fighting Update Series

http://www.webcom.com/~albany/infight.html

The site is premised on the notion that the Religious Right is a minority with control of the Republican party. By highlighting the division and internal wranglings in short articles posted several times a week, the creator hopes to help rectify this situation. Those with an interest in the internal politics of the GOP will probably find it fascinating. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Holt Labor Library

http://infopark.newcollege.edu:80/holt/

This page is fairly devoid of information. It states, in a cursory manner, what the Hold Labor Library is and how to get there. For those of us who do not live in San Francisco, there isn't a lot here. The exception is the fairly large and well-annotated list of labor videos for borrow. This would be a very useful site for labor activists if the library got more of its collection on the Web (and also got a good Webmaster). Worth checking back to see if the site grows.—*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

PeaceNet Home Page

http://www.igc.apc.org/peacenet/

This is probably the most comprehensive list of peace and justice issues on the Web. The site contains an exhaustive collection of links to sites that promote anything from African-American rights to voting issues. Unfortunately, it doesn't go much beyond a list of links. If you're looking for information, you most likely will not find it on this site. What you will find is a link to it. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Republican's Web Central Home Page

http://republicans.vt.com/gop.html

The big question is: Do links count as content? To a degree, yes. It's something like 1/20th of a point for each link. So, Republicans Web Central has content because it has lots of links. The pastel background is kind of ugly, and the pictures of Republican candidates for President don't help the aesthetics much. The home page is particularly uninspired, featuring a title and four links. On the positive side, though, all the links seem to work. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

The Conservative Corner

http://www.vanderbilt.edu/%7Egreenst/cc/

This political site is also limited to links, without any original content. All the links have picture icons to represent their sections. The picture of Reagan is a bit tasteless, considering his current mental condition, and the picture of Limbaugh is just plain ugly. "Conservative Corner" is a misnomer, though, because most of these links are representative of "neo-Conservatism," which became popular in the 1980s. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society

http://www.envirolink.org:80/orgs/seashep/index.html

The hardest-hitting, most radical environmental group on the high seas now comes to the Web. It's always enjoyable to read about the Sea Shepherds humiliating and devastating the eco-villains of the world. If you have never heard of this controversial group, check this site out. The group swears by nonviolent confrontation. Its Web page is well-designed, and it's the first one I've run across that uses frames. Be sure and read the captain's logs. I found a significant number of small technical problems with the site, but they should be fixed by the time you read this. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

Welcome to Scampaign 96 Headquarters

http://www.comedyusa.com/Home.html

The 1996 Presidential election is gearing up, and candidates are marching out of the woodwork like a professional clown troupe, making us laugh until we cry. Well, the crying may have more to do with so many of these freaks being absolutely serious about the various ways they want to control our lives. The Scampaign '96 site should provide some needed relief from all the scary rhetoric. The site is run by a bunch of comedians who are creating their own style of political journalism, a style that has become necessary, considering the ridiculous lows to which current campaigns have sunk. The home page is updated frequently with news and commentary from the front, and should continue up to the fateful day when we pick the '97-'00 version of the president. The Scampaign '96 commentary is also distributed as a mailing list, which can be registered for through a form on the site. If you have friends without Web access, get them on the mailing list. Barry Weintraub is the mastermind of Scampaign '96, and he makes no bones about his political cynicism. "We hope to entertain and inform and unite disaffected voters through the common bond of cynicism," he says. If this is the only way to get people to vote, then rock on, little warrior. Another area of the site has profiles of all the presidential hopefuls, plus quotes to let voters know the candidates positions on various issues, like this one from Phil Gramm: "I was a foot soldier in the Reagan Revolution. And as president, I want to finish the Reagan Revolution." Sometimes, no comment is necessary.

The site has its own cabinet, filled by people like Johnny Steele, Minister of Rants; Nate Hale, Minister of Treason; and Will Durst, Minister of Caustic Commentary. Each "Minister" has his or her own opinions to offer, and they're not all as left-leaning as the general tenor of the site. Also, look for "The Noah Letters," a correspondence between common citizen Noah Fillmore and the various candidates about their positions on the issues, published exclusively on this site. Mr. Weintraub has big plans for Scampaign '96. "We hope to use the site as a springboard to establish a permanent comical journalistic presence." Inform and entertain, with cynicism and justice for all. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Academics needing software tools for formal papers should visit Chorus.

Chorus Reviews & Resources for Real World Computing

http://www.peinet.pe.ca:2080/Chorus/home.html

This is a very helpful page for academics — those folks who need special software to ease the pain of academic papers, bibliographic programs, computer-assisted language learning, and the like. Chorus offers book and software reviews of interest to humanities scholars — especially those specializing in language, literature, and Biblical studies. There are reviews of relevant books and software programs, links to humanities sites, and links to other areas for professionals — like doctors. A nicely organized page that any humanities grad student or researcher needing software tools for formal papers and so on will appreciate. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Designlink Online Resource for Creative Professions

http://www.designlink.com/

This site — which includes brief sketches of designers, up to 15 thumbnails of their digital work, and contact info — charges fees for listings and graphics files. To date, the San Francisco Bay Area dominates listings. How to entice more diverse listings that attract clients, and how to convince prospects that it will lead to new jobs for them? This is the challenge Designlink faces on the Web. If it can be overcome, Designlink's Online Portfolio could well be a handy place to scout for illustrators, graphic designers, multimedia, and other artists. —*KW*

If listings are expanded, this site could become a great way to scout out artists.

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

Lawyers Cooperative Publishing

http://www.lcp.com/

LCP is one of the oldest legal publishers, and this impressive page testifies to its expertise. The info here mostly describes the many law texts (state and federal) LCP sells, and features painstaking tables of contents for each title. The best reference page is The Legal List (http://www.lcp.com/The-Legal-List/TLL-home.html), which enumerates a host of Internet-based legal resources you can find. There's a very helpful list of law-related BBSs, newsgroups, and listservs, for example. There are also links to info on law schools, corporations, and non-U.S. resources. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Professionals Online Home Page

http://www.prosonline.com/Professional

This is what I call an "eager-beaver" page. Someone trying to target small businesses has fallen in love with NetCruiser and created a page geared to that audience. The only problem is that the links to a variety of travel, sports, news, job, and career sites are standard and few in number, and they're built into very mundane, text-heavy pages. The Jobs page is probably the richest of the bunch, with brief annotations. Pros Online needs to focus in order to get ahead of the Web fan club, and be of greater use to business types. —*KW*

The concept is good — a page for small businesses — but it's not well-executed.

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

WorldNet In-Between

http://www.goworldnet.com/intdib.htm

WorldNet Online claims to have a resource page listing architects and interior designers (U.S.? world? They don't say), but even the plain-alpha listing only gives you the text, not hotlinks or any company names. Nor are there cities, client listings, or firm size info. When I checked, you could only find listings by firm name; the index by specialty brought me the dreaded "404 Not Found" message. The folks who made this are in desperate need of Web architects and interior designers before they hang out their shingle. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **F**

Welcome to ELLE

http://www.ellemag.com/

SITE OF THE MONTH net MARCH 1996

Though I may not be the fashion vixen you think I am (ack, ack), I do know a good Web site when I see one. And, though it may pain me to rain such praise over a fashion magazine, I have no choice but to do just that. *ELLE* has got a great Web development team (or so it appears) and the site is stunning. *ELLE* won't taunt you with teaser paragraphs and dead-end links. It's nothing but top-rank professional. The site walks you through selected features on style, fashion trends, society, and culture from last month's issue, and gives the table of contents for the current newsstand issue (wouldn't want the paying subscribers to get miffed). The features are long enough to keep you busy for hours, and they're laced only with the highest quality graphics. The haute couture set would be proud. Dahhling, pass me the Gray Poupon and the Netscape, please! But that's not all. *ELLE* also invites repeat visits with a model gallery (for gawkers and fans of the world's top super models); a link list of *ELLE*'s favorite online fashion hot spots; and an event list that'll "put you in the thick of things." Sure, they lay it on kind of "thick" themselves at times, but isn't that what glamour is all about? But I do have a complaint with the "numerology" report. When I checked in December, it gave me a reading (with an oh-so-clever birth date calculator) for October. Oh well, we can't all be as perfect as Linda Evangelista.

The organization of the site is superior. It's an easy and intuitive path to uncover the feature stories, jump to trends, get in touch with editors, and subscribe (though it wasn't quite ready for online transactions when I checked — get ready for the 800 number— I suspect it won't take much time for *ELLE* to remedy this). Overall, ELLE is the best fashion magazine on the net. And the special tenth anniversary page is super-cool, with almost animated ELLE covers of past years. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing, not great	Not stupid
Needs more content	A dog	Needs a brain

publications

The Atlantic Monthly

http://www2.TheAtlantic.com/Atlantic/

Say hello to the Web page and goodbye to its print progenitor: This online version offers all of *The Atlantic*'s erudite, exhaustively researched content, and much more. Current issues appear in their entirety, though art and photos are played much smaller. Links are logically arranged, so navigation is as intuitive as flipping through the print version. Web technology has turned this liberal think-piece journal into a whole new affair: The Book Browser allows you to read the first chapter of each book reviewed; a search engine helps you find specific content; interactive word games award prizes to "Jeopardy"-caliber readers. Overall, this site raises the benchmark for repositioned magazine content. —*JP*

Atlantic Monthly's Web site has managed to surpass the print version.

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Cipher Comic Graphic Novel

http://vvv.com/home/cipher/

It's captivating in most every aspect. The logos float through blackness inviting with mystery. The words are simple and few, provoking curiosity. And the content? The content is stunning and thoughtful. Cipher is a graphic novel —a collection of original pen and ink drawings, stories, and digital artwork. The site debuted early last winter and has been steadily growing since; definitely one to bookmark as it promises to continually evolve. I'm duely impressed. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Gogreen Ecotourism Magazine

http://www.peg.apc.org/~tasol/gogreen.html

Instead of shelling out a few dollars for a tacky resort t-shirt, *GoGreen Ecotourism* magazine wants tourists to plant a tree. This online magazine promotes eco-happy travel ideas complete with useful packing tips. *GoGreen* lacks any photos of tourists rolling up their sleeves and cleaning up a camp site, but you can read some inspiring tales of traveler environmentalism in the EARTHY section. *GoGreen* dares you to go where most tourists fear to tread, void of air conditioning and plumbing — the great outdoors. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Gray Areas Magazine

http://w3.gti.net/grayarea/

Like its print counterpart, *Gray Areas*' Web site explores the fringes of fringe culture through a skeptical, civil libertarian filter. Click on a profile of the self-destructive (and now dead) rocker GG Allin — a man who regularly attacked audience members and ate his own feces during stage performances — and you'll find not a gratuitous shock-rant, but a thoughtful investigation into Allin's First Amendment rights and the world that begat such a loathsome demon. The site is light on graphics. Save for a few run-of-the-mill psychedelic backgrounds, its pages are almost completely devoid of art (though links are logically arranged). —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Inquisitor Mediarama

http://www.echonyc.com/~xixax/Mediarama/Inquisitor/index.html

Inquisitor might be a great magazine, and it does mention at the very top of the page that this is just a sampler of what's available in the print zine... But I ask you, what could be more irritating than getting hooked with a paragraph of an article and then having to order back issues to read the rest? Why couldn't they print just one full article instead of a zillion mini taunting teasers? The layout is fine and clean and whatever, but I'm pissed. Bleachk. I suppose it's a triumph for their marketing ploy that I'll just have to go out and buy it now. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

InterText: The Online Fiction Magazine

http://www.etext.org/Zines/InterText/

InterText is more memorable for the magnificent cover art than the actual stories. The illustration of a swirling blue sky behind a little boy begins the journey of entertaining stories within the online fiction magazine. With titles to stories such as "Barefoot Sinderella" and "Storm's Child," *InterText* creeps inside the reader's imagination and never climbs out. Other stories delve into the minds of hackers, fishermen, and dead Russian leaders. —*BJB*

Intertext whisks you into a world of entertaining stories.

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Kudzu: A Digital Quarterly

http://www.etext.org/Zines/Kudzu/

Kudos to *Kudzu*, a quarterly journal dedicated to saturating the Web with the best in underground poetry and fiction. By making it available in Adobe Acrobat PDF format or standard ASCII text, the founders of this literary magazine want to make sure no one is left out of reading the latest issue. *Kudzu* features unusual perspectives, including a tale of

murder at a magazine kiosk, an ode to dead grass, and a short story about an annual beach house retreat shared by friends. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

The Morpo Review Cover Page

http://morpo.novia.net/morpo/

The Morpo Review morphs stereotypical views of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction into a bizarre escape from the traditional world of literary magazines. With poems soaked in dysfunctional family angst and a twist of subway passenger diversity, Morpo delivers readers a unique blend of writing styles. The site goes beyond basic print and asks readers to step in the CyberCafe to chat with writers about their work. Unlike stuffy journals, the Morpo Review online magazine grabs your attention and refuses to let go. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Multiworld

http://www.fys.kuleuven.ac.be/vsm/personel/qiu/mw/index.html

If it's a small world after all, the Web only shrinks it further. *Multiworld* sends this same message to its readers. As a bimonthly multilingual publication relating to such topics as nature, wildlife, culture, people, traveling, and art, *Multiworld* offers articles in languages other than just English. Read a New York diary in Chinese or an account of an academic experience in Taiwan. The photo snapshots and arty graphics only add to the quality of this site. —*BJB*

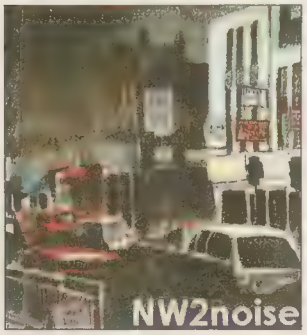
net rating: *overall:* **A**

Nigel Wears 2 Nighties

http://www.maires.co.uk/nw2n/

NW2noise — what's this about nighties? — is pure in mission, and a cinch to explore. You'll find underground music journalism and "complete tracks from the World's most obscure, unlistenable, and ear-damaging artists." If your system doesn't support sound playback, you can always read the highly detailed record reviews. Even die-hard "alternative" music fans should be impressed by the site's menu of bands, the majority of which hail from overseas. The most mainstream offering I encountered was Team Dresch — hardly a Pearl Jam or a Green Day. Graphic presentation is adequate, but you came for the sound files, right? —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**



NW2noise features tracks from the "most obscure, unlistenable" artists.

Visiting this site will prepare you for the weather, if you can pull yourself off-line.

The Old Farmer's Almanac

http://www.xensei.com/ofa/

The next time you mutter to yourself about forgetting an umbrella while walking home in the pouring rain, remember to visit an old farmer on the Web. The Old Farmer's Almanac is online and ready to help readers outwit the weather. Get a five-day forecast from a link to New Jersey Online, or read about the history behind the successful almanac, published since 1792. The site would only improve with more articles from the actual publication, but the sun graphic peaking out from the corner of the page reminds us that Mother Nature could be a lot less accommodating. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Outside Magazine

http://outside.starwave.com/outside/online/magazine/omindex.html

Sitting behind a computer all day leaves most of us with an itch to ditch work and go outside. Thanks to *Outside Magazine*'s online site, you almost feel the dirt beneath your feet. Read articles on skiing, hiking, celebrity athletes, national parks, wilderness therapy, and more. *Outside Magazine* also displays some breathtaking photography and amusing illustrations. After exploring the Web, the magazine encourages its readers to explore the best interactive site of all — outside. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

THE PM ZONE

http://popularmechanics.com/

GIFs of rivets and sheet metal decorate the *Popular Mechanics* magazine online site, The PM Zone. With more than 1,000 pages of text, The PM Zone wins hands down for its quest in informing the Web public on do-it-yourself home projects, computing, new technology, and, of course, auto maintenance. Watch clips of *Popular Mechanics* movies, or talk shop in the HomeArts Online Network. Travel in the PM Zone Time Machine to see the progression of technology spanning from 1900 to 1960. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Spectrum

http://www.autobaun.com/~kbshaw/Spectrum.html

Spectrum is a "Family" zine a la Web. There's stuff for kids of all ages — folktales, artwork, political humor (nothing too brash, fear not), and editorial features (usually geared toward the older family members.) It also sports links to family-esque advertisers and software, like the "Puzzle Pack" to use with the *Spectrum*-designed "Puzzle Page." It's still a bit thin in places, but it's got a good foundation. And make certain to read the story of "The Brave and Bold Little Squirrel." —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Threaded Contents

http://village.ios.com/~paulchiu/threaded/threaded.htm

My first reaction was to think: "Not another 20- something look at the world by people who don't really understand what it is like to be 20-something." But after probing a bit deeper, I found some interesting articles, ranging from sexism and racism to body art and American politics. There's also a streamlined layout, a broad range of opinions, and a helpful "Net Reference" section that should help newbies along the dirt path that is becoming cyberspace. So, open your mind and take a ride. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

The Utne Lens issue # 10

http://www.utne.com/

Broken down into community, society, art, travel, culture, media, technology, mind, body, and spirit sections, the Utne Lens focuses on what a real Web magazine should embody. As the companion Web site to the magazine *Utne Reader*, the Utne Lens needs no introduction as a

Utne's site turns its lens on articles and opinions ignored by mainstream media.

place for articles and opinions that mainstream media tends to ignore. However, Utne Lens also offers a fun grassroots section, where readers can create their own mini-home pages or chat in the cafe with other readers. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

WebZine Weekly

http://www.peli.com/

By 8 every Monday morning, WebZine Weekly is delivered to the Web without an annoying loud smack against the garage door from a vindictive newspaper boy. This general-interest publication includes articles on anti-Rush Limbaugh views; conspiracy updates, leisure sports, computer law reports, parenting advice, and more. WebZine's look — another Netscape-enhanced design complete with tables — mimics some of its more commercial competitors, but has a gonzo journalist attitude all its own. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

with that big round butt of yours I'd like to butter your muffin

http://netspace.net.au./~butta/butta.htm

Miss Butta's Homegrrrl Page celebrates all things B-grrrl — "a new movement based around grrrls involved in the hip-hop/funk/skate scene." B-grrrls dig hip-hop, but add a non-judgmental spin to an art form traditionally laced with misogyny. You'll find band profiles, album reviews, and impassioned fanzine-style commentary. You'll also discover sound files from recently released rap and hip-hop albums — a service that all appropriate Web pages should emulate. Unfortunately, the site is "over-linked." Tread carefully, or you may find yourself in No Grrrl's Land. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

reference

Computing Dictionary

http://wombat.doc.ic.ac.uk/

What is the difference between HTML and HTIL? Is a "scag" as bad as it sounds? The Computing Dictionary explains acronyms, jargon, programming languages, architecture, operating systems, networking, theory, conventions, standards, telecoms, electronics, companies, products, history, and just about everything else to do with computing. Brush up on your hacker slang, or experiment with the ping command. The search option makes tracking down a specific subject easy. Newbies and GUI gurus alike will appreciate this extensive text-only guide to computing. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Department of Fine Arts Okanagan University College

http://oksw01.okanagan.bc.ca/fiar/hndbkhom.html

If art expresses emotions, illustrates concepts, or persuades audiences, this online art history handbook only succeeds in boring us. One might expect an art history site from the Department of Fine Arts at Okanagan University College to be avant-garde and actually display some paintings with its tips on writing an A+ paper. But no single sketch is found, only text upon text about the do's and don'ts of writing. Visit this site if you're stuck on writing an art critique for class and need some impressive words. Otherwise, dip your paintbrush elsewhere. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

FREE Internet Encyclopedia

http://www.cs.uh.edu/~clifton/encyclopedia.html

Once you get past the extensive parent disclaimer, you'll find this encyclopedia is yet another Internet site directory, similar to Yahoo! and WebCrawler. Topics are divided into MacroReference and MicroReference sections, depending on the subject size. From African art to Zen archives, almost every subject has a home page in its honor. However, the title of this site misleads you into believ-

This site offers an encyclopedia composed of information available on Internet.

ing the encyclopedia publishes original content and definitions. The FREE Internet Encyclopedia is merely a bookmark list and nothing more. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **D+**

Grammar and Style Notes

http://www.english.upenn.edu/~jlynch/grammar.html

Stop dangling participles and the abuse of semi-colons with the help of Grammar and Style Notes. This online reference guide, written by an English teacher, covers every usage and style mishap imaginable. Grammar and Style Notes also helps writers avoid plagiarism with the rules of citation. The guide explains the evils of split infinitives, run-on sentences, and overused cliches. Don't let your next research paper go to hell in a hand basket when Grammar and Style Notes is the next best thing to having your own private online editor. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Welcome to The Encyclopedia Mystica

http://www.bart.nl/~micha/mystica.html

Find out why Chronos kept track of time, and discover the differences between gnomes and fairies in The Encyclopedia Mystica. This Netscape 2.0-enhanced reference guide would impress Zeus with its use of tables and index searches, yet disappoint him with the lack of illustrations. The encyclopedia provides short explanations about Greek and Norse gods, mystical creatures, magic weapons, and forgotten places. But without visuals, the site lacks the wonderment and magic of the very creatures it describes. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

religion

Bahá'ís

http://oneworld.wa.com/bahai/magazine/cover.html

The Bahá'ís and the Quakers routinely compete for the title of "nicest religion." A young faith, Bahá'í continues to make a strong showing among the more disaffected members of the Western world. This site offers an extensive introduction to its world view. Doctrine, history, a blueprint for the future — all the trappings of a religion are here. Thoughtful organization and a clean layout make this a delightful spot to surf; if I were choosing a religion on the basis of its Web presence, the Bahá'ís would have my soul. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Dark Goddesses

http://www.csulb.edu/~persepha/gateway.html

America has never suffered a shortage of religions. Christian sects have always proliferated on these shores, and then sects have always proliferated on these shores, and the twentieth century has seen an explosion of the New Agey as well. This site promotes a rethinking of the current "Goddess" beliefs, examining the darker set of female deities and mythical sorts. I was pleased to see one of my favorites, Kali, make a strong showing. This space offers a great deal of background information on numerous gods, and would be of interest to anyone investigating female empowerment in myth. —*SS*

The Dark Goddess revels in non-Christian religions, and uses large images to do so.

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

ELCA Homepage

http://www.elca.org/

For Christians of the Lutheran faith, this is a great Web site. It's well-designed, with tasteful icons and buttons, and it's easy to get through. It's also boiling over with content. Not only will you learn about the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, but you'll gain insight into other Lutheran churches, their beliefs, and the specialty services they offer. Most interesting, though, is the fact page, which outlines the church's demographical information. It's for a specific audience, obviously, but it serves them well. —*SK*

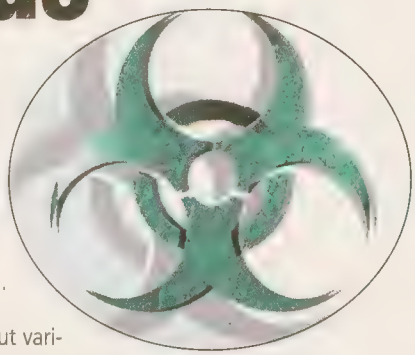
net rating: *overall:* **B**

GOSHEN Global Online Service Helping Evangelize Nations

SITE OF THE MONTH net MARCH 1996

The Church of Virus

http://www.lucifer.com/virus/



Now entering the Virus Zone. Closed and/or irrational minds may be offended. Open and/or rational minds may be infected." This opening warning and the all-black background set the tone for this site. You're given the choice of clicking on high- or low-bandwidth (always a nice option) and then you're off.

The entire rationale behind Virus is to infect readers with a broad range of perspectives, and to encourage the questioning of faith and spirituality. This site is not intended to "trash" religion or horrify "believers" with blasphemy and irreverence, though at times it might be mistaken as such with links to paganist and satanic resources. The biases are clear from the start, but not overwhelming or pushy.

There are lots of curious bytes to Virus. Separate from one another, they might seem trivial, but taken all together, they help create comprehensive and well-supported arguments. One link will take you to a page about Daniel C. Dennet's book, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*. The page sports reviews that have been printed in national journals, and also invites readers to submit their own opinions of the book. The same is true with Kevin Keely's book *Out of Control: The Rise of Neo-biological Civilization*.

Church of Virus

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing, not great	Not stupid
Needs more content	A dog	Needs a brain

Again, the Virus creator is seeking surfer participation and interaction, all the while allowing us to ingest his creation and make our own decisions about it.

The rest of the site is filled with statements, summaries, and observations about various movements of philosophy, politics, religion, science, technology, and evolution. Virus is relentless in its pursuit, striving to infect us again and again. And, what I found most valuable beyond the overwhelming amount of time and effort taken to build this site (intense graphics and layout aside) is the reading list. It's a hyperlink hoe-down of literature to move you through the process of deciding what religion is or isn't right for you. Many of the recommended books have links to summaries, or places they're available online. And, to supplement this reading list, there's also a page of Internet resources to spawn further questioning and perhaps a few answers.

There will be some who have no need for this site and will most certainly be offended, but there are many others who should find great thought-provoking pleasure. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A+**

http://www.goshen.net/
Looking for a Pentecostal space on the Web? Trying to track down a Baptist book publisher? GOSHEN offers a Christian-focused search function and more. Billing itself as the Internet Christian Resource Directory, GOSHEN aims to provide a free and easy vehicle for Christian organizations to establish presences on the Web, and to offer a directory of such sites. I especially liked the verse of the day; heaven knows how frequently I start craving a fix of Luke. The resources here are plentiful enough to warrant this site's inclusion on any collection of Christian bookmarks. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* ***B***

The Hinduism Today Home Page

http://www.HinduismToday.kauai.hi.us/ashram/
One could spend hours pouring over the Hinduism Today pages (the Web companion to a full-color print journal articulating Indian spirituality). It's a never-ending array of beautiful and well-constructed pages lined with news, current events, health and history of Hindu spirituality. There's a wonderful section of the journal reserved for the exchange of Aums (Indian graphic metaphors) that is both spectacular to look at and thought-provoking. It's a fantastic creation. —*KV*

Hinduism Today's site is a well-constructed companion to the print version.

net rating: *overall:* ***A***

An Internet Guide to Chabad Literature

http://www.utexas.edu/students/cjso/Chabad/chabad.html
Wow — this has to be the one-stop site for Chabad information on the Web, made more noteworthy for its location: Texas! Rabbinical writings, sound files of Jewish songs, an art gallery, and more. Doctrinal questions are reviewed, bringing together widely scattered information and presenting it in an accessible form. I highly recommend this page to any believer or interested party. A most impressive Web space, Learned Protocols be damned! —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* ***A***

Nomius Zen Garden

http://www.nomius.com/~zenyard/zenyard.htm
It's a little hokey. Though the general principal is good, with weekly stories and Koans (proverb-like quotes) to help guide Zen Buddhists through their journey, the tone is slightly condescending in its "let us show you the way" approach. The site uses advertising, but the creators have selected sponsors who support their mission, such as a natural vitamin supplier. There's also a version of the story of 10 Bulls in full hypertext format. And, for the multimedia component, there are sound clips and visuals to help you relax and meditate. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* ***B-***

Quakers: Autobiography of George Fox

http://www.cs.pitt.edu/~planting/books/fox/autobiography/autobiography.html
The Quakers have long played an active role in civil protest in this country, often engaging in all manner of dissent and disobedience. How does a group with such a reputation for pleasantry and niceness justify such conduct by its members? Part of the answer lies within the life of George Fox, whose writings embody much of the Quaker truth. This site offers the autobiography of Fox, available in RTF, PDF, text, and HTML formats. Those seeking Quaker resources should do a net search; this site simply offers up Fox's work, and does so with simplicity. —*SS*

This site offers an in-depth look at the man pivotal in shaping the Quaker faith.

net rating: *overall:* ***B-***

SDAnet

http://www.sdanet.org/
If you have a question concerning Seventh Day Adventist doctrine, chances are you will find an answer on this site or one of its crosslinks. A significant portion of Adventist materials on the Web must be within two hops of this page. The work itself is not of a proselytizing sort; it is clearly intended to assist the Believer in contacting like-minded others, and in acquiring the resources necessary to maintain the Faith. This page is certainly of interest to any Adventist; others may find it less inspiring. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* ***B+***

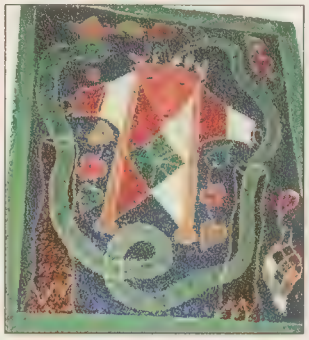
SufiWorld

http://www.unibio.com/spirit/sufiworld.html
"You are the center of your universe," the Sufi Islamic Page preaches. There are poems, essays, links to products, and a section on medical philosophies. Though the pages look nice, it's hard to really submerge yourself in the concept if you aren't already practicing the faith or have a strong knowledge of Sufism. Overall, it left me a bit puzzled, but I wouldn't count it out, especially for those specifically curious about the religion. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* ***B***

Voodoo in New Orleans

http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/LGilbert/voodoo.htm
Don't go to this site expecting to find information about Voodoo in New Orleans (as Yahoo! would have you believe). Instead, these are photographs of Voodoo temples and cemeteries in New Orleans, and as a work of art, the site is captivating. I especially liked the photo of the Haitian Voodoo flag. The site's small — only a handful of photos — but interesting for the curious. And it has a nice overall layout and general good feel about it. —*SK*


Visit this site, and learn about Voodoo flags and where to go in New Orleans to find the Voodoo hot spots.

net rating: *overall:* ***B***

Albert Einstein Online

http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~smfriedm/einstein.html
Well, I can't hide my disappointment. I had hoped to find this a page created by an Einstein fanatic who had spent years researching and writing and compiling archives of or about Mr. Relativity. But no. It's just another hotsy-shotsy link list of other people's content. Big deal. Sure, the layout and organization are nice, and the links are a bit more selective than, say, a Lycos search might provide, but overall, it's nothing special. Sigh. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* ***C***

Animal Resources

http://www.bev.net/education/SeaWorld/infobook.html
These pages are part of the larger SeaWorld Web site, but taken on their own, they cover a large spectrum of general animal information, including reproduction, conservation, characteristics, scientific classification, and much much more. It's not the prettiest learning tool available, but it's quick to respond and full of hard-core animal facts. There's also an interesting section geared to interested young people on how to become a marine mammal specialist. Whales to hippopotamuses to birds in danger of extinction, it's all here. —*SK*

Dolphins and belugah whales are among the sea creatures highlighted here.

net rating: *overall:* ***A-***

Astral Projection Home Page

http://www.lava.net/~goodin/astral.html
If you're into astral projection and lucid dreaming, tell your analyst this site may be a trove of useful information. The meat of the site is a searchable library of all the articles and pages on the Web relating to these topics. There's a a fairly extensive collection of articles and an interesting feedback form the author uses to collect data for future articles. There's also a place where readers can leave tips on how to improve your astral projection skills. The site lost marks from me because over half the navigation links did not work. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* ***B+***

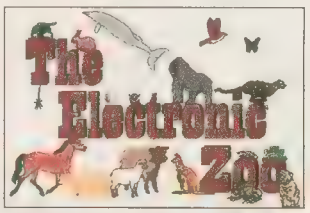
ECOLOGY Channel Homepage

http://www.ecology.com/
The ecology channel wants to keep you current on the trials and tribulations of man vs. nature. There's an extensive news section that covers topical issues, a kids corner (with Captain Seaweed), a profile of species in danger (with photographs and information), and additional information on a wide variety of conservation and environmental organizations. The site itself is slow, however, and sometimes waiting for a page takes a little longer than any reasonable person has time for. But if you're determined, there is good stuff here. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* ***B***

Electronic Zoo

http://netvet.wustl.edu/e-zoo.htm
If you're looking for any sort of animal-related information and want your list to have more structure than Yahoo! or Lycos, check out NetVet's Web extravaganza. It's out-of-control huge, with links to, as mentioned, all animal-related everything. Don't worry, there's a search engine to help guide you through the



There's an out-of-control number of links to animal-related sites here.

site, and low and behold, it works! The graphics are so-so to great, depending on the section, but the information and organization will leave animal lovers smiling. —*LS*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Fun With Numbers The Home Page

http://www.mind.net/xethyr/numbers/index.html

This is one of those sites that remind me why I like the Web so much. Some math fan with an interest in writing C programs that calculate prime numbers, *pi*, and other series that excite mathematicians decided to put the results on a page. To top if off, the guy has a really good sense of humor. He also has some useful items, such as all 100,000 digits of 2 to the 33,333 power, and fractional equivalents of *pi*. Be sure and check out the author's home page. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Home Page of VolcanoWorld

http://volcano.und.nodak.edu/

This site is geared toward children and designed for classroom use. That didn't stop me from spending several hours searching through it. This site does a good job of giving enough information about volcanoes to keep readers interested without burying them in a sea of data. There are several good information and interactive sections (including "Ask the Vulcanologist," complete with FAQ). The site is searchable and has a good bit of volcano tourism info. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

IMLAB

http://imlab9.landarch.uiuc.edu/

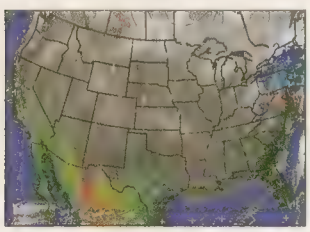
IMLAB is the satellite imaging lab of the University of Illinois. The site gives a good general introduction to imaging and its benefits. It also goes into detail, about many of the projects that the lab is currently involved with, from inner city revitalization to Asian reforestation projects. I found the site fascinating. The projects are interesting to read about and the images are impressive. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Interactive Maps

http://thunder.atms.purdue.edu/interact.html

It's weather. Plain and simple. It's about the same as watching the Weather Channel on cable, though there are no commercials and you can get the local forecast any time you want. Click on the image map for a general region or type in the specific city you're looking for. It's fairly accurate, and it's updated about about every six hours. Sometimes, the server gets bogged down (it's a popular site), so be prepared to wait. —*SK*



Click on the map and get the current weather for cities across the U.S.

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

The NASA Homepage

http://www.nasa.gov/

It would take me literally months to dissect and review each and every section of NASA's infinite Web site. Dare I say

As this complex image map shows, NASA's site is a huge resource.

NASA has more server space than anyone else, ever? Maybe not, but it's huge! There's art, science projects, spacey info, shuttle news, technology development, student projects, and more, more, more. Everyone and anyone can probably find something of interest here. My only qualm with a site this big is that there *should* be a search engine, else muddling through could take days. If they have one, I sure couldn't find it. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

National Zoological Park Home Page

http://www.si.edu/organiza/museums/zoo/homepage/nzphome.htm

This is an extremely well-done site. It is very much geared toward persons planning on taking a trip to the park. Included are maps of the zoo, schedules of activities, and a wealth of other information that would help plan a trip. There are also interesting behind-the-scenes articles that talk about the reality of managing a zoo, and the ideals and goals of the zoo itself. You can currently FTP animal pictures, but hopefully they will put a full-blown zoo on the Web soon. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Ocean Planet Homepage

http://seawifs.gsfc.nasa.gov/ocean_planet.html

Speaking of NASA, it seems this agency has conspired with the Smithsonian to bring us a hypertexted version of "Ocean Planet," a traveling exhibition to explore and present the planets ocean

Everything from biodiversity to pollution and sea surprises are found here.

history. Surfers can search for specific ocean-related data they'd like to learn about or take one the curators "special tours" on biodiversity, women and the sea, pollution, sea surprises, or others. There is a lot of info here, so plan on spending a great deal of time soaking it all up. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Rob's Granite Page

http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~rmr/

There's something charming about a guy fixated on granite. This page has everything you ever wanted to know about one of our most common rocks. A lot are technical research papers that were way over my head. Any serious geology buff, especially one who's into granite, will probably enjoy this site. Also, for those of you who live in Texas, there's an excellent section on the Llano Uplift. There's also a comprehensive set of links to the granite research community. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Physics Unbound

http://uptown.turnpike.net/L/lindeman/physics_ub.html

Ahhh. I get giggly and excited when I think that one person created this amazing physics resource page just for the fun of it, solely for the purpose of "hypertexted scholastics." Our physicist Web friend has built some basic pages to describe some basic premises of physics: Newton's Laws, the periodic table, Hamilton's Principal, and so on. He encourages surfers to contribute their pages of knowledge, either to link, or to archive on his server. It truly is unbound and perfect for craving minds. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Search the Light Holography

http://www.holo.com/search/search.html

This is an advertisement for a book you're supposed to get excited about and buy. It did not work for me. The site does feature a whopping one photo of a hologram by one artist. There's a list of holographic artists and one of their works, which may be of interest to those with a newfound interest in holography. The site's creators also have mastered the art of having lots of pages with lots of text while saying nothing. Pretty much the site is just bizarre. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **D+**

Southern Forest Nursery Management Cooperative

http://sofserv.forestry.auburn.edu/coops/sfnmc/sfnmc.html

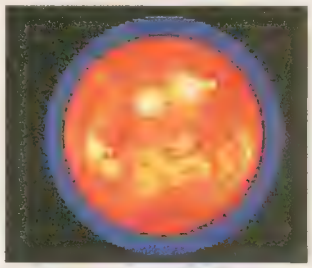
This is a site with extremely limited appeal. I'm sure those of you who are professional foresters will find it fascinating. The rest of us will be less than dazzled. The high point for me was the collection of Pesticide Information Profiles, which inform about the acute toxicity of the hundreds of chemicals served to us in our food. Click on over to the Methyl Bromide section to ponder deep forestry philosophy questions such as, "Is soil fumigation with methylure bromide consistent with ecologically sound principles?" The site does have a lot of good information for those who are serious about silviculture. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Space Images Archive

http://www.seds.org/ftpweb/

Pictures, pictures, and still more pictures. Search or browse through hundreds of space-related pictures: planets, space observatories, art, eclipses, launchers, and anything else having to do with



Solar pictures are among the visual delights of the Space Images Archive.

space stuff. I typed in the word "Pluto" and got seven pictures to choose from, ranging from the planet to satellites that track the planet. Very cool. It's quick and if you get a chance, look at the X-ray photo of the sun — it's amazing. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

The Tele-Garden

http://www.usc.edu/dept/garden/

Tele-Garden is an actual garden planted, watered, and viewed by a robot controlled by members via the Web. The interface is excellent, and you can communicate with other gardeners via a message wall. This is one of the most technologically advanced sites I have

Anyone can view the garden set up at the University of Southern California, thanks to a tele-robotic installation.

ever seen on the Web. It's designed to be viewed for a short period of time on a regular basis. And I believe it personifies the nature of the Web. Like the Web, it's creative, offers an interesting

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Rich in content	*A visual 10!*	*Rocket science material*
Fair amount of content	*Appealing, not great*	*Not stupid*
Needs more content	*A dog*	*Needs a brain*

use of technology, and, most of all, is a a regular basis. And I believe it personifies the nature of the Web. Like the Web, it's creative, offers an interesting use of technology, and, most of all, is a place you can waste away hours doing something completely useless. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **A+**

THE ULTIMATE UFO PAGE

http://www.serve.com/tufop/

UFO mania (or is it awareness?) has reached an all-time high. This site appears to be an attempt to capitalize on this to sell books. The site features several articles, most of which are links to other sites, and a few pictures. Links to only 15 other UFO sites are provided, surprising considering the deep interest in this subject on the Web. The design is good and if the page were greatly expanded, it would be an excellent site. Perhaps we should all send in our abduction experiences to be added to the site. —*BB*

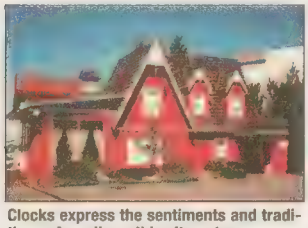
net rating: *overall:* **C**

shopping

A HOUSE OF CLOCKS

http://www.clockstore.com/

If you have a thing for cuckoo clocks or other large timepieces, skip the GIFs of the actual House of Clocks (in suburban Seattle) and peruse the rest of this page



Clocks express the sentiments and traditions of our lives, this site notes.

for a few moments. But for purchases that range from a Krazy Kat model ($30) to mantel clocks ($300-$600), you might want a bit more description, more refined dimensions, or at least a better image than you'll see here. At least Clockstore offers a three-year warranty on its clocks — and a page of links to other clock-lovers' sites. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Atomic Books Electronic Catalog

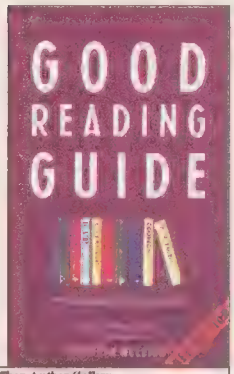
http://www.clark.net/pub/atomicbk/catalog/catalog.html

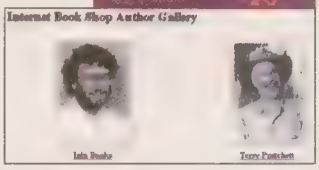
The electronic catalog is the online version of the physical Atomic Books store in Baltimore, MD. And I know just how to get there because there's a map on the site. The book selection is great; it consists of all the weird and eclectic stuff you won't find at Barnes & Noble. Besides underground comic books and graphic novels, there are sections for revenge, hiding your identity, and trash culture. Unfortunately, online ordering isn't very sophisticated. No shopping basket; you just have to type the name of your selection into a text box. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

The Internet Book Shop

http://www.bookshop.co.uk/





IBS claims to be the biggest online book shop, and while biggest is not always best, in the case of a bookstore, it means a lot. O.K., browsing through a bookstore is like meditation for me; I lose all sense of time, who I am, where I am. That is, if it's a big enough bookstore, if I can get away from any windows to the outside world, then you won't see me for at least a couple of hours. IBS, with 780,000 titles, is big enough. The fact that it's online means no distractions, like sirens from the street, or loud people.

Browsing a bookstore's shelves is a lot like surfing Web pages, which is probably why an online bookstore seems like such a good fit. As far as online commerce goes, it's easier to ship books all over the world then it is to ship cars, or pets. And shipping is an important factor with IBS, because it's based in Britain, or Oxford, to be exact. Worldwide shipping has a lag time of four to 14 days, which doesn't matter a heck of a lot when you're ordering a title you can't get from any local bookstores. For Web pages, a U.K. address also means slower response time, which could be a problem if you're doing extensive searches. Oh yes, there's a search utility, an essential resource for a site like this. It's quick and easy to use, allowing you to search by title, author, ISBN, or publisher. If you're not sure where you want to start browsing, then the subject listing might be the place for you, although I did find the subject breakdown just a little bit weird, such as the category "Fiction, 'True Stories,' Humour." I'm not really sure what True Stories have to do with fiction. In fact, I think they are kind of the opposite. The site also has the Bloomsbury Good Reading Guide, a compendium of recommended authors and books, which is an excellent way to find new favorites. What really endeared me to IBS was its special focus section on Hergé's *Tintin*. Not only does it have every one of the graphic novels, each page has picture from the cover. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Classifieds 2000

http://www.classifieds2000.com/

Classifieds 2000 specializes in cars. Sellers list free; buyers can easily access offerings either by scanning entire listings or scanning desired criteria. My search string of "Japanese car, manual, under $1,700" came up with more than a few good leads. If the car of your dreams isn't currently listed, a "cool notify" feature will e-mail you when one arrives. Classifieds 2000 currently only serves the San Francisco Bay Area, but expansions to Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and Boston are in the works. Real handy, and they took time to make it look good, too.—*RR*

This automotive classifieds site e-mails you if the car of your dream gets listed.

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Classified Flea Market

http://ww.cfm.com/

All ads are in the 510 area code (which is the East Bay Area, that vast district across the water from San Francisco), unless otherwise noted. Again, real handy if you're in this part of the country; means bupkis if not. The site offers free listings, simple search by any of the 90 categories, etc. The novelty here is CFM's ad of the week, which, on this outing, was a beaded wedding dress. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

eMall

http://eMall.com/

eMall is not exactly ready for prime time. The promising front-end covers a multitude of sins — skimpy product lines, unappealing text blocks describing those products, dead-end screens just two layers from the top. Basically, it's an inch-

deep cover for just a few items, and not ones generally considered "must-have." The assortment is strange, too: mens' suits, gardening magazines, T-shirts, wooden picture frames, the ubiquitous Web florist, spices, coffee and tea, commercial leasing — not exactly a "full-service" mall. Next time, eMall, get your vendors in a row before declaring yourselves open for business. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

EPage Internet Classifieds

http://ep.com/

This general merchandise online ad paper claims 75,000 actual readers ("not hits!"). Commercial ads support the free placements by regular humans. Searches are available by region and subject, which are broken down into detailed sub-groups. It could be a good source to find what you're looking for, but it needs more ads to choose from. Still, if you have something to sell, it can't hurt to post it here. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

FreeAdz Classifieds

http://www.freeadz.com/classifieds/

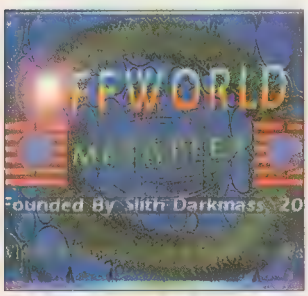
This electronic version of the Boulder County, CO paper lets individuals list free. Businesses, collectors, and breeders (which, I assume, refers to people who deal in animals, and not the slang expression for heterosexuals) pay for theirs. Also included is a "Soap Box" page, where you can rant about any issue you want, as long as you present solid arguments (which takes the fun out of it, if you ask me). Useful, but only if you live in the area, or have a desire to see what they're trying to unload out there. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Offworld Metaplex

http://offworld.wwa.com/

An extremely groovy and eclectic shopping mall with an outerspace theme. The credits read "Offworld Metaplex, founded by Slith Darkmass, 2035." One purpose of the site is to advertise Darkmass Productions' Web design services, so the



Offworld Metaplex is the place where "shopping is just a light year away."

graphics are really good, although somewhat unrestrained. Unfortunately, it lacks one very important factor that most malls have: shops. You know, places where you can buy things? It does have enough goofy stuff, like art galleries, a wishing well, and the black hole of pain, that it's fun to go there anyway. And you won't spend any money. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

marketplaceMCI HOME

http://www2.pcy.mci.net/marketplace/index.html

MCI is making a valorous attempt to corral online shoppers with its Marketplace. There are several points in its favor: It's signed up a few name-brand retailers (Hammacher Schlemmer,

Beauty Express' fragrances are among the offerings at marketplaceMCI.

Lillian Vernon, Nordstrom, Footlocker, Mac, and PC Zones); the page is fairly easy to navigate and comprehend; and you don't have to register in order to browse. But none of the retailers offers a full line of products, or anything approximating their (paper) catalog selection. It's clearly just the beginning, and though you may not be tempted to shop here yet, chances are good you'll want to come back. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

The MegaMall

http://infotique.lm.com/cgi-bin/phpl.cgi?megamall.html

To put it simply, MegaMall is just a tad overblown. There are impressive front doors, navigational text, and graphics aplenty, but these are merely a facade for a hodgepodge of small vendors with fairly scant offerings. The categories are many (antiques, jewelry, sporting goods, pets), but the pickings few. MegaMall focuses on unappealing text blocks and has few pictures. Also, a fair part of its site actively promotes the mall to new clients, which lessens a customer-friendly feel. If this is what shopping online is all about, "traditional" malls don't have much to worry about. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

Monkey

http://www.digitalrag.com/mirror/monkey/monkey.html

This is primarily a store for hats and shirts, with unique artwork by Ken Brown. Wait a minute. Did I say "artwork?" This is clothing with prints of things like coffee cups. Artwork may be a stretch, but it is unique. The prices seem reasonable, although to actually order anything, you will have to revert to voice communications. Seems like good

Cartoon animals printed on T-shirts and accessories is the selling point here.

gift material for people in their early 20s. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Speak To Me Catalog

http://clickshop.com:80/speak/

The unifying element to each item sold on this site is that all of them speak. Ahhh, the wonders of microchip technology. The catalog runs from the serious — tapeless recorders — to the humorous — swearing keychains — to the bizarre — a talking spatula. Talking spatula? At this point, we should all collectively say: "Go figure," and get on with our lives. Complete online ordering capability, but the graphics are way-bad. Lots of audio clips, though. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Violet

http://www.webcom.com/~gabriel/violet/home.html

This classy looking site makes just a few products very appealing. The slightly precious categories ("Cozy" for two styles of comforter, "Covet" for earrings

Violet uses exquisite artwork and an exceptional image map.

and a necklace, "Handy" for a toothbrush holder) are still lovely to behold on the screen, and the products are not items you run into every day — as the prices will testify. Even so, the images of the products, their brief and informative descriptions, including price, will surely whet the appetite of shopping devotees. Ordering is easy; you can choose to charge by phone or fax if you're nervous about credit card numbers. Put your bookmark here. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Virtual Book Shop

http://www.virtual.bookshop.com/

Used books may be among the products best-suited to be on the Web, as the audience is clearly full of readers and researchers who delight in finding a very particular item. The folks at Virtual offer you access to their no-frills database of rare books, first editions, antiquarian, and collectible titles. You can search by author or just check out their listings. When it comes time to order, the VBS process is refreshingly painless and straightforward. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Welcome to Cybershop

http://www.nfic.com/Cybershop/Online

Cybershop's bold, busy, colorful, and loaded with lots of graphics and buttons that take you s-l-o-w-l-y to products listed by manufacturer (!) under generic categories like bathroom, bedroom, electronics, gourmet food, toys, and so on. You can also do a custom search of the Cybershop database — but be prepared for long waits, annoying mandatory jumps from product description to price (why don't they appear on the same page?), and unfamiliar product names.

Despite a plethora of product categories, Cybershop makes shoppers wait.

This site is about as much fun as waiting for a clerk to get off the phone to wait on you. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **D+**

Welcome to ISN

http://www4.internet.net/cgi-bin/getNode?node=1&source=DYHO&session=2798755

Internet Shopping Network is a Web pioneer, with handsome graphics; clear, readable screens; a sensible directory of products; and shopping categories. Its shopping categories make sense for the Web: computer and photography gear, specialty foods, flowers, home and office accessories. Being a trailblazer doesn't ensure volume or quality, however. There's still no compelling reason to buy here. But at least you won't develop a headache by browsing, and ISN will be worth visiting more than once. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Welcome to Web Warehouse

http://webwarehouse.com/

Web Warehouse is kind of like a strip mall, and most of its shops are holding a closeout sale. WW wants to grow, of course, but at the moment, the mix of vendors includes purveyors of luggage, watches, an off-brand long-distance service, diamonds, coffee, books, office furniture, and, of course, flowers. Each of these hedges its bets by only offering you a few items. You don't get to pick through much, and you don't know why. Let's hope the strip mall goes away, or gets smarter before too long. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	*A visual 10!*	*Rocket science material*
Fair amount of content	*Appealing, not great*	*Not stupid*
Needs more content	*A dog*	*Needs a brain*

net SITE OF THE MONTH MARCH 1996

Resort Sports Network

http://www.RSN.com/

Skiers of the world unite. Well, skiers, snowboarders, and resort lounge lizards of the world unite. This site aims to be a one-stop shopping guide to winter resorts in the U.S. It does an outstanding job. RSN starts with an ultra-clean front page laced with smooth-stylie graphics (nice icons), and a comprehensive main menu — what's new, video clips, a resort locator, events schedules for the resorts you locate, contests to play, links to follow, and a series of spy cams to show you what's really happening in these vacation havens. It's packed.

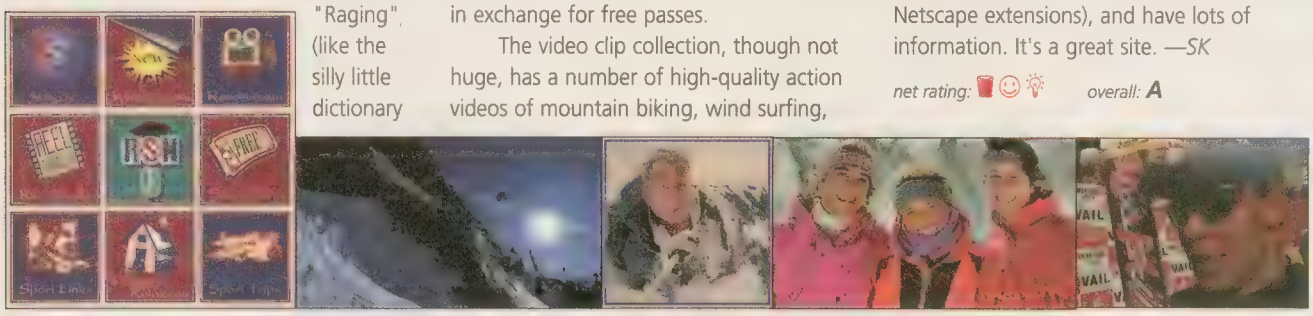
RSN maintains a huge college students section, and although it has some cheesy bits and bytes about what is "Rad" and "Raging" (like the silly little dictionary of "cool" words), it also has some very useful information. The extreme sports page is great, with a comprehensive list of trails and runs for the dangerously inclined (the mountain biking in Maui interview is fabulous). There's a special contest area "for college students only." The site also helps you organize group trips and guides you through an events calendar for the various resorts (it's actually the same as the events calendar linked from the top page, but in different, perhaps hipper colors). Most impressive, and important for the budget-minded, the site points you to where you can ski for free. RSN lists resorts that are looking for seasonal instructors and helpers in exchange for free passes.

The video clip collection, though not huge, has a number of high-quality action videos of mountain biking, wind surfing, and general extreme sport goop. You can also view the scenery from one of 14 resort cams (Vail, Tahoe, Park City, Wildcat, and others), with an updated image every few hours.

RSN sports a Usenet-like, threaded chat section for surfers to converse about the various hot spots and not-spots, trade skiing tips, and ramble about whatever else they want to, which may or may not relate to resort stuff. It's a fairly active list, so definitely check it out.

All the pages load quickly, look great (the creators have mastered their HTML and Netscape extensions), and have lots of information. It's a great site. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**



sports

Cleveland Indians Home Page

http://www.indians.com/

The Cleveland Indians Page offers player info, game schedules, online merchandise sales, and team stats. It also has great graphics, which put it an inch above most other baseball-related sites. The icons are tasteful, the pages load quickly, and it's overall very good. And, the creators promise to add video soon to jazz up the site with a little multimedia foo foo. Of course, if you aren't an Indians fans, none of this matters anyway. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Da Truth

http://www.odyssee.net/~xsys/

Here you'll find extreme sports and extreme layout, with trendy graphics and angular construction. Lines and boxes, and it sure does look cool. Unfortunately, the content is a bit thin and some of the links dead end at error stops. Sure, the site warns that some areas are still under construction, but why make a link live if there's nowhere for it to go? Oh well, despite its annoyance factor, the site has some good stuff for inline skaters, skateboarders, and snow boarders — especially nice are the global listings of parks and resorts.

This very cool-looking site caters to skaters and snowboarders.

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

DansWORLD Skateboarding

http://www.cps.msu.edu/~dunhanda/dw/dansworld.html

It may not be slickest-looking skateboard page, and it may not even have the most current content, but nonetheless, I really like this site. It's got FAQ files and gossip, tons of pictures, a few videos, links, and a super-cool photo archive of net surfers who also also skate. The Mike Blabac photos of the San Francisco skate scene are pretty tasty, too. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

GT BICYCLES

http://www.gtbicycles.com/

I ride GT because its bikes are well-constructed and look cool. And, guess what? Its Web site follows suit with a super-clean layout, mucho information (e.g., an online catalog of all its bikes and accessories), and valuable dealer locator searching capabilities. You can type in a zip code, select what you're looking for (parts, frames, tech shops), and you'll get an accurate list with addresses and phone numbers. GT also provides updated news, events, and bike related links. Very cool. —*SK*

Not surprisingly for a company that makes cool-looking bikes, GT Bicycles has created a clean and easy-to-search site.

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Influx Magazine Issues

http://enternet.com/skate/skate.html

Influx is a skate zine. Skater this and skater that, but mostly, it's just photos. Perhaps I shouldn't say "just" photos. The pictures are RAD, but if you were looking for juicy gossip, tips, or reviews, it's pretty thin. It does have some video clips, though, and as image-intense as they are, the pages load fairly quickly. Some of the highlighted images are of skate icons —Tony Hawk, Mike Judd, and Tim Brauch. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

NBC Golf Tour

http://www.golf.com/

At first glance, it seemed a little busy to me. But after I probed through the NBC Golf Tour site, I was left to assume it's cluttered only because it has more golf information than any sane server could handle. Egads, it's packed. Search the entire world for gold courses, via a clickable image map, get gold tips from pro Jeff Maggart, stay in tune with upcoming events and NBC broadcasts (yes, NBC is a very visible sponsor), or visit local clubs and merchandise vendors. No corners are skipped: There's contact

NBC is a very visible sponsor of this golf info-packed site.

information for all of these places. It's perfect for serious golfers. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Seattle Mariners Home Plate

http://www.mariners.org/

It's official. (Toyota advertisement and all)! Learn everything there is to learn about the Seattle Mariners. Did you know that Infielder Rich Amaral has a degree in business from UCLA and weighs 175 lbs.? Yes, that's the nitty gritty type stuff you'll have access to. Of course, the site has archived team schedules, tells you how to contact your favorite Mariner, and contains "merchandise" to buy (secure only for Netscape users). The layout is O.K., nothing too special, but die-hard fans will probably like it just fine. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

The Sports Network

http://www.sportsnetwork.com/

O.K., sports fans, if you're looking for an alternative to ESPNet (http://espnet.sportszone.com/), this ain't a bad jaunt. It's consistently updated with news, events, and scores, and offers both professional and collegiate coverage. It's got a nice layout, good enough graphics (though few huge glossy action photos), and a pretty dang-fine searching mechanism. And the site doesn't skip corners. There's information on just about every team, archived locally on the server. (Yup, mucho original content here.) It's a winner. (Nice cliche, eh?) —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

travel

China

http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~felsing/cstuff/cshelf.html

This site on China is much, much deeper than any other I've ever seen. Sponsored by the Council on East Asian Libraries, it's broken down into areas of interest, such as Art, History, Language, even Gender Issues. Some pages are chock-full of links (the "Art" area has several dozen), while other areas are a bit shallow. There are similar pages on other major East Asian countries, at http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~felsing/ceal/welcome.html. —*TG*

This logo, taken from the stone rubbing of Yen Chen-Ching's calligraphy, is among the art offerings at China.

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Expotel Home Page

http://www.expotel.co.uk/expotel/

Want to know about hotels in Zimbabwe? Check out Expotel, the world's largest hotel and mobile phone reservation system. Well-heeled travelers have quite a selection: seven high-quality tourist hotels in the Dutch city of Rotterdam, for example, with prices ranging from 87 to 290. But 87 to 290 what? This is a typical hole in the site: nowhere does it tell you that prices are in the local currency, in this case guilders. At the time of this writing, the site had lots of hotels listed, but lacked some key information. Keep an eye on it for improvements. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Discover the Keys

http://fla-keys.com/

A tourism site for the Florida keys, this site has extensive information about Key West, Key Largo, etc. Each set of Keys has its own section of accommodation

Discover the Keys entices the traveler with its urgings to "come join us, recharge your batteries and rejuvenate your spirits."

and shopping listings, history, and various relevant information. Although this is a graphically inclined site, I didn't particularly care for the colors and backgrounds used. There are times when you're sorry you can view all the HTML extensions. The site could have also used maps of the Keys, as maps are one of the great pleasures of planning trips. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Electronic Embassy

http://www.embassy.org/

The Electronic Embassy reminds me of a bank lobby: lots of space, nice marble and brass fittings, and people in business clothes, but there isn't much you can do there. It's a program of TeleDiplomacy (a non-governmental organization) to serve the "diplomatic community" in Washington, D.C. As such, it has some good, basic information. But most pages eventually recommend that you call the appropriate parties. Like, by phone, man. But I'm glad it's here: It's an evenhanded and nonpolitical way of improving communication among governments. And that ain't bad. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

France Travel Tourism Tours Festivals Studies

http://198.147.102.107:80/francescape/top.html

Tourism is big business in France; that's why the French Tourism Board in the U.S.

Planning a trip to France? Click on by this site to get the latest tourist news.

is actively promoting its country via all media, including the Internet. This site from that governmental body is full of the kind of language you'd expect from a P.R. firm. ("This region abounds with treasures," etc.) That's not to discount it, though: There's tourism info (duh), stuff on studying in France, and legal information you'll need about visas and such. None of the areas is very deep, but they'll get you started. Beware the occasional ghastly color scheme. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

The French Travel Gallery & Hotel Reservation Center

http://www.webcom.com/~wta/

I have an affinity for any site that welcomes you in more than one language. The FTGHRC (gesundheit!) is one such site, offering menus in French, English, and Spanish. Hélas, such multilingualism fades away below the first level or two — quelle dommage. What is there is nicely arranged, though: hotel reservations, boutiques, regional information, and, of course, the obligatory link to the Webmuseum. Unfortunately, the content isn't nearly as deep as it should be. And, as with most other hotel reservation systems, this one isn't good at finding rooms at less than $50/night. Sigh. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

GNN Travelers' Center Homepage

http://nearnet.gnn.com/gnn/meta/travel/index.html

The Travelers' Center doesn't look that rich at first: just a few links to articles and companies. But what makes it exciting is that the articles (actually, first-person travel accounts) are regularly updated, and the companies are off the beaten track. Want to go hiking in Africa? Here, you can book the trip and read stories to prepare you. A drawback: The site's organization requires you to click through several screens to find what you want. Don't overlook that link at the bottom, which leads to the "Travel" section of GNN's business pages, and more links. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Guyana Gateway

http://www.surinam.net/guyana/guyana.html

Guyana is best known to U.S. residents for the religion-centered mass murders in

GNN regularly updates its travel articles, and includes stuff off the beaten track.

what is commonly known as "Jonestown." But then again, we're not the best political/geography students in the world, are we? The Guyana Gateway is a good place to increase your I.Q. about this small Latin American country, located in a wedge between Venezuela, Brazil, Suriname and the Atlantic Ocean. It also sports one of the best uses of frames I've seen to date: visit it with a frame-capable browser, such as Netscape 2.0 or later (but try to ignore the ubiquitous "blink" tags, if you can). —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Hong Kong Home Page

http://www.hongkong.org/

This very complete guide to Hong Kong has a specific section for travel and tourism, but there's also plenty of other information for the virtual traveler, including history, government information, business and economy, etc. The tourism information is pretty good, including a section on shopping that lists the kinds of products you might want to buy in Hong Kong, along with advisories on shopping strategies. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

The Internet Guide to Travel

http://www.guideto.com/

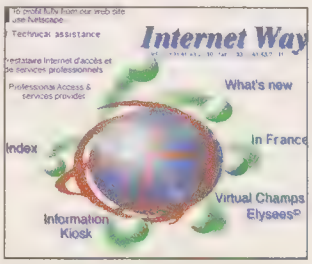
With a title like "The Internet Guide to Travel," I expected a heck of a lot more. Like, maybe, some information about traveling. But nooooo, all you get is a link to a hotel chain and an airline (apparently, the service's only paying customers so far), and a tiny bit of information about Hawaii and Los Angeles. Oh, wait: Neither of those links seem to work. So, I guess there's nothing here except for ugly banners, inconsistently done HTML, and an ad to get prospective hotels to pay for listings. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **F**

Internet Way

http://www.iway.fr/internet-way/uk/

It takes a few minutes of wandering to realize that Internet Way is an Internet



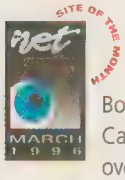
This French Internet service provider has some unusual nuggets for the traveler.

Service Provider in France, offering access, Web design, and the usual blah blah blah. But there are a few unusual nuggets here of use to the traveler: Take a gander at the "Virtual Champs-

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing, not great	Not stupid
Needs more content	A dog	Needs a brain

The One and Only Morocco WWW

http://www.agadir.com/maroc/

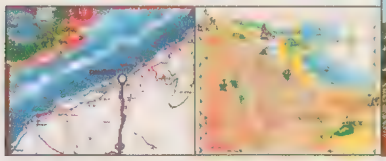


Ah, the mysteries of Morocco: Tangiers, with its connection to ex-pat authors like Bowles and Burroughs; Casablanca, made famous the world over by Humphrey Bogart. Fez, known as the source for shriner hats. While filling in information gaps about Morocco had every possibility of killing the mystique of the place, I had to know more. The One and Only Morocco WWW isn't the only Morocco guide on the Web, but it's probably the best one. I think the trick is not taking "one and only" for its literal meaning.

As a travel guide, it's not the most immediately practical. It doesn't have a complete listing of all the hotels throughout the country. There are no train schedules online. No restaurant listings. This is the kind of guide that tells you a lot about the country, and primarily whets your appetite for going there. It's also the perfect place for the virtual traveler. The virtual traveler might like to know what the restaurants are like, or see pictures of some of them, but a listing of all of them, with directions how to get there, is unnecessary.

This site covers so much of the culture and what's in Morocco, and there are so many pages, you can get in pretty deep. The site is littered with pictures of Morocco that illustrate the various sections. History, which goes back beyond Roman times, is covered. The site describes the flavor of 12 major Moroccan cities, and even has some of the most beautiful and useless maps. They have great graphics, but don't really show much detail as far as streets go. The Moroccan cooking section is probably my favorite, listing recipes for delicacies like Bastela and Couscous. There actually is a section with practical travel information, but knowing how many kilometers of railways there are in Morocco doesn't exactly help me ride them. The whole site was created by two students, Nabil Zary and Mounir El Abridi, and the impression I get is that the site is a labor of love. Versions of the site exist in English, French, Swedish, and Spanish, so it's got the World in World Wide Web covered. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A**



Elysées," which lets you walk in the door of dozens of companies located along that famous street. There's lots of stuff here about France in general, although the depth of info in this section is disappointing when compared to the Champs-Elysées area. But all in all, c'est magnifique! —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

The New V3

http://www.dataflux.bc.ca/

The New V3 is the redesigned site for the city of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, and it is huge. I clicked and I clicked until I was tired of clicking. There's stuff all over, from British

Learn about sailing on the Victoria Line at the New V3 site.

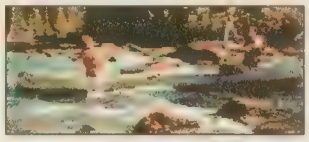
Columbia ferry information, to a whole mini-site about Buchart Gardens, a large, private park in Victoria. Unfortunately, it's not very well-organized as a travel site. There are some maps of the area, but they are in the ferry section, and the museum information is pretty sketchy. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Parks Home Page

http://www.awinc.com/users/ewilliam/parks.html

An independent effort to provide information about a couple of parks in British Columbia, this site has content that's a little brief and a perspective that's too



Find loads of information about parks in British Columbia, Canada.

narrow, but the design is really good. The graphic design, at least. The site has a 211K GIF of Bowron Lake Park and a 207K GIF of Murtle Lake in Wells Gray Park, which are both a little unwieldy for my tiny computer screen. Strangely enough, certain parts of the site have German translation. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

Park Search

http://www.llbean.com/parksearch/

L.L. Bean sponsors this site, so it might be time to forgive it for trying to make the populace of this entire country look like it came from Maine. As a trip planner for you outdoorsy types, this is invaluable. The first page gives the option of searching by a park's name, which is good if you know where you want to go. Further in is a page to search by park activity, so if you need a place to go canoeing and horse riding, these can be your search criteria. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Scotland Travel Guide

http://www.scotourist.org.uk/stb/

I think the term "guide" is pretty ambitious for this site. It's a fairly nice-looking site, and it was created by the Scottish Tourist Board, so it's got credentials, but it never get around to telling you what's there. No hotel, restaurant, or shopping listings. Nothing about the local cuisine, and I didn't even see anything about the Loch Ness Monster. There are neat, clickable maps that lead to poetic descriptions of the various regions of Scotland. The first improvement I would make would be to add a bagpipe soundtrack. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

SF Off the Beaten Trail

http://cyberE.creative.net/~brackish/

Ah, San Francisco, my favorite city. The home page suggests this is "An Alternative Guide For The San Francisco Tourist," so, of course, I have to inspect it, because I know The City. And, apparently the creator of this site does, too, although he or she hasn't done a very good job of communicating this knowledge via the Web. The neighborhood listings are unfortunately short and a little bit narrow in their view. The bar and club listings aren't very well contextualized, and most lack description. —*WKC*

The storefronts of the Castro are featured on the SF Off the Beaten Trail site.

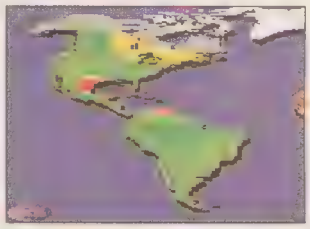
net rating: *overall:* **C+**

U.S State Department Travel Warnings

http://www.stolaf.edu/network/travel-advisories.html

It may seem strange that the official repository of State Department information is at St. Olaf's College in Minnesota, but it makes sense when you consider that Travel Advisories have been available through this site since 1991, long before the Internet was used outside of universities. This site remains a prime source of information for international-minded citizens. If you're a regular traveler, you'll want to subscribe to the mailing list, too.—*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**



Intrepid voyagers, take note: Travel advisories galore are to be found at this site.

vanity

2oz.Dry
http://www.fishnet.net/~zeke-k/
2oz. Dry contains a collection of stuff by Zeke. Inside his realm of Browntown, one will find pictures of Space Toys, a photo album, and some random musings that are the highlight of the site. These little stories are humorous and odd in a Douglas Adams/Terry Prachett sort of way. Some are good, some, incomprehensible. The best one I read was about myriad terrible fates that would befall you if you didn't tie your shoe laces. With a few more good pieces like that, the site would be a few ounces heavier. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Aaron Fuegi's Personal page
http://www.bu.edu/~aarondf/aboutme.html
Everything you'd want to know about Aaron is here, and he'll send you to the ends of the earth perusing his interests. Aaron likes gaming. Aaron likes backpacking. Aaron likes science fiction. Aaron likes to collect quotes. Aaron likes

In case you wondered, Aaron loves to hike. Here he's in the Rocky Mountains.

his job. Aaron also cobbles together some great pages NOT about himself, too. The best of these is his Daily Web Paper, in which he extracts news, sports, weather, and other information from a wide variety of other sources on the Web and edits them together on one sheet. Automatically. To think he almost became a lawyer! —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Barbara's Land
http://metro.turnpike.net/B/bluebird/
The one thing going for Bluebird the Mensa Mom's home page is that she's not a college kid on the Web. Her personality only occasionally shines through her barrage of links. Besides the usual ones to friends' pages, hobbies, and interests, Barbara has created a set of links by color. Red Links go to places that have "red" in their name. Blue Links go to "blue" stuff. You get the idea. There is also an index of humor text documents she keeps handy. You know, the kind that are e-mailed around the world seven times? Some of it's funny, some isn't. Some of this page works. Some doesn't. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

I'm Full of Myself
http://www.users.interport.net/~dolphin/ego.html
This woman was crowned Miss-Babes-O-Rama on Babes of the Web. Whatever. Site has more links than Hormel has sausage. The creator admits to a huge ego, though claims this is tongue in cheek. One gets the impression that in real life, she is good natured and perky, but that you still wouldn't want to get cornered at a party by her. The site looks good, with lots of dolphin imagery. It has links to "cool corporate" Web sites, an oxymoron if there ever was one. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

Jeff's House of Illegal Bodily Functions
http://www.wco.com/~jeffg/
Jeff Gerstmann shows he's a kid with attitude. The very beginning of his home page carries the phrase: "Anger is my business and business is good." Come on, Jeff, let go of the rage. Well, a young man living in Northern California will find a lot to rebel against, and Jeff chooses interesting ways to express himself. There is his page devoted to Jack, the spokes clown for Jack in the Box, the page describing his public access show, Doughnut Wednesday, and his CUD collection, with way too much rap in it. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

koolthing.html
http://ni.net/quikslvr.com/koolthing.html
This site is a portfolio of sorts for a design firm, and it shows. The look is clean and simple. The photomontage artwork is first-class. The content mostly consists of links — to galleries on the Web, arty sites, and to other links. The whole effect comes off as a bit pretentious, with each grouping of links headed by a wordy introduction espousing random postmodern drivel. And if you're one of the 10 percent who use a text

This site's first-rate images reflect the creator's graphic design background.

browser, don't bother to visit. The place becomes unnavigable. Otherwise, it's a nice set of links to places I didn't feel like going. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Marcel Valcarce's Place
http://www.phatbits.com/mv/mv.html
Marcel's a computer guy, and it shows. His personal page is very well-designed, but mostly consists of a resume and a gallery of his 3-D art and animation. A

Marcel discovered KPT Bryce in 1995 and used it to create this image on his home page.

pictorial series of an alien invasion of Earth is really cool and worth checking out. And the rest of the sci-fi themed pictures are almost as imaginative. The resume, though, is another story. It's just a dry litany of the millions of programs and systems Marcel is an expert at. For some reason, it gets equal billing with the gallery. Maybe something more personal or revealing would have been better. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Odd Todd's Home Page of Immaturity
http://www.rice.edu/~stadler/
Is Todd Odd? Not any more bizarre than any other net denizen. Todd just documents his life on the Web. In detail. Kermit the frog greets you and with a friendly Hi-Ho points you to learn about Todd's band, the music he likes, the friends he keeps. There's a special page dedicated to the ceiling of his room. It's all pretty amusing. I especially liked the dictionary of terms he uses in his Web page for words like Erg, Blah, and Farq. Rice University might not be the same without Todd. Just don't call him Weird. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Phil's Plethora of Pages
http://falcon.jmu.edu/~pollarpe/index.html
Phil swears his pages suck, but they don't. His Werewolf page is really fun, and his Disney Pages are a great resource for fans. Some of his pages however, have a hastily, slapped-together look. If he took the time to index and conform the design of all his pages and personal information a bit more, he'd have a nice portfolio here. It could have something to do with living in Lynchburg, VA. Last time I was there, it reeked of dog food from a local factory. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Redmond Rose
http://www.halcyon.com/redrose/joan.html
This chronicles Joan L. Grove Brewer's big beef against her former employer, Microsoft. Her story, supported by memos and newspaper articles, is either a truly horrific example of corporate abuse, the ranting of an embittered nutball, or both. She claims that as a consequence of pointing out software flaws, corporate Microgoons beat her up, resulting in a severe spinal injury. Her argument loses some credibility toward the end, where she goes off on a diatribe about demons, angels and plagues. An altogether strange tale definitely worth looking at. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Richard Quodomine's CS cluster home page
http://macronet.com/~richq
Richard is an international and world trade major and computer minor who likes Motley Crue, the Buffalo Bills, and his friend's home pages. Because he can, he has decided to share this with the world. Good for him. If you like International and World Trade, computers, the Buffalo Bills, and Motley Crue, too, maybe you and Richard can exchange e-mail. I'm sure he'd like that. —*RR*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

The Home Page of Randal L Schwartz
http://www.teleport.com/~merlyn/
Randal Schwartz is a .net-god who's been "surfing" since it was possible to read every Usenet message posted that day in about 30 minutes. Randal has his hands in many pots. In addition to his well-known standing as a PERL language expert, he writes computer books, pilots planes, karaokes until eardrums pop, and skis down hills very fast. He's also been busted by the Oregon authorities for stealing passwords from Intel. Follow the scandalous story here, and you will not be disappointed. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

The Wonderful World of Sam Padgett
http://cec.wustl.edu/~sgp1/
Sam leads a charmed life. He's posted pictures of his friends with links to their home pages, photos of himself on his recent trip to Israel, and links to his favorite places. I liked his buttons best. I've seen thousands of hyper-linked buttons before, but these are special. I just wanted to keep on pressing them. Forever. After immersing myself in Sam's world, I think I might be able to walk up to his dorm and insinuate myself into his life, insisting I was his best friend in Israel or something. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

web technology

Home Page Generator
http://www.cs.uoregon.edu/~jolson/makehome.html
Instead of going through all the anguish of mastering HTML, visit the Home Page Generator and make a minimal home page in minutes. This form-driven site asks for basic information to include on the page such as the title, contact information, and a bit of text. You can preview your newly created page or copy the code to add your own graphics and

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	*A visual 10!*	*Rocket science material*
Fair amount of content	*Appealing, not great*	*Not stupid*
Needs more content	*A dog*	*Needs a brain*

BOB c WEB

http://www4.ncsu.edu/~asdamick/www/

SPIFFO LINKS

I just wanted to take this Kodak Moment to say that you people are not mentioning me often enough in your posts. You have been forgiven, for I am a benevolent human being, but you will simply have to do better from now on."

— The BOB(c) (from Usenet newsgroup news.misc)

Thus begins the saga of The BOB(c), net.god and raving egomaniac. Well, there's a reason we're calling these Vanity pages, and The BOB(c), alias Andrew Damick, has done an exceptional job in this extensive shrine to himself. To be fair, there's a lot of material here that doesn't have anything to do with The BOB(c), and a distinction should be made between the online persona and the man behind the curtain. And one more point on the fairness angle: Credit for a lot of the graphic design goes to one Beverly White, another well-known net.god.

The BOB(c) is famous throughout Usenet-landia, and has published a lot of very useful newsgroup how-to information on his site, like "How To Create an Alt Newsgroup." There are archives of postings from newsgroups, which is probably some of the most humorous writing anywhere. The BOB(c)'s link library is incredibly large and very eclectic. Just about all of the most interesting and well-designed places on the Web are listed here.

When asked about the purpose of the site, The BOB(c) replied: "Words are my domain. Playing with them is what I do, and that is evident in my site." It's also pretty evident in his very active Usenet life, where he maintains his own newsgroup, alt.fan.the-bob. As for communication, The BOB(c) says: "I generally get several pieces of e-mail per day concerning my site." Asked whether he had any plans to incorporate Java or VRML into his site, he replied that he has no immediate intentions to do so, but did say he may add "some 3D, animated, talking groundhogs to lead you through the pages and read my poetry to you." And, I should mention that The BOB(c) does not have a list of his CDs on the site. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

backgrounds. The Home Page Generator has yet to offer the razzle-dazzle options of forms, tables, or animation, but gives HTML-phobes a chance to create Web sites of their own without much hassle. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

HTML Help

http://www.obscure.org/~jaws/htmlhelp.html

Leaving aside the nifty graphic of an industrial worker, the HTML Help site is otherwise a bland list of HTML design tutorials available online. With information on HTML writing, converters, browsers, graphic viewers, and news groups, HTML Help offers to push you in the right direction. Yet with all the HTML bookmark lists already on the Web, this site should try to offer something more than just a push. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Jim Massey's HTML Workbook

http://sokol.softaware.com/library/jim/jimhtml.htm

Jim Massey wants to "enhance human potential by expanding the HTML technical envelope" with his HTML Workbook. This online workbook includes Massey's "1,001 Web Site Tour List," his ".10 Standard-Setting Web Technology Page," the "Emerging Edge Tutorials" section, and links to Dr. Cye's "HTML Reviews of 130 Books," the "Timothy Leary Page," and more. There's also Web Server news, articles, and tools. Instead of pushing the technical envelope to other sites, Massey takes the time to explain where he thinks Web technology will go, and how we can use it to enhance our lives. It's a useful site to visit. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Almost Complete HTML Reference

http://www.well.com/user/millenn3/

No site offering advice on HTML design compares to the extensive resource directory from "The Almost Complete HTML Reference Guide." Here, you'll find books on HTML design, information on more than 22 Web browsers, links to more than 30 HTML converter sites, tips on color backgrounds and transparent GIFs, and even step-by-step guides for creating forms and tables. Anyone just beginning to create a pit stop on the Web should check out this guide before construction. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A+**

The World Wide Web Consortium W3C

http://www.w3.org/pub/WWW/

As the producer of specifications and referencing software for the Web, the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) works within the Internet community to help promote standards on this new medium. At this site, you'll be able to read about W3C's philosophical views of the Web, or see for yourself what W3C plans to focus on — whether it be security concepts or HTML scripting. W3C lacks graphics to keep most visitors' attention spans, but those interested in standardizing the Web will find a wealth of information and opportunity to get involved. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

BB: Brian Bearden is a computer science student and astronomy staff member at the University of Texas who's trying not to be driven off the brink of madness by the hate and confusion of the world. He can be reached at pepe@mail.utexas.edu.
BJB: Bonnie J. Burton (burtonb@ucsu.Colorado.EDU), 23, is a geek girl who freelances articles on computer culture and designs WWW sites to pay rent, has more e-mail friends than real ones, and thinks Bettie Page should run for president. Her Shameless Self-Promotion Page hides at: http://ucsu.Colorado.EDU/~burtonb/Home.html.
KB: Ken Bousquet (bousquet@thenet-usa.com), when not hanging 10 on our T1, imagines hit'n the lip in super-smooth style in the heavy water near his place at Ocean Beach.
JP: Jon Phillips (jon@thenet-usa.com), *The Net*'s new Managing Editor, is more afraid of you than are you of him.
KV: Karina Vasser has been curiously displaced from her existential clique in Paris, 1950.
KW: Karen Wickre has co-authored *Atlas to the World Wide Web* (Ziff-Davis Press, 1995), edited *Guide to Netscape Navigator* (ZD Press, 1996), and contributed to *Yahoo Unplugged* (IDG Books, 1995). Despite all of this, she is able to remember life before the Web. You can reach her at Kwickre@aol.com.
LG: Lauren Guzak, *The Net*'s CD-ROM editor (guzak@thenet-usa.com), plans a hostile takeover of the world once she gets her life in order.
LS: Lydia Schwartz serves as The East Coast Correspondent of *The Net*. She holds a degree in computer science and can be found on any given day jogging across the Brooklyn Bridge with her golden retriever, Doom.
MP: Matt Patterson (DrBubonic@aol.com) lives in Los Angeles and is currently paid to make screw catalogs. Read his magazine, Ooze, at http://www.io.com/~ooze.
PB: Patrick Baggatta is good with a variety of weapons. More importantly, he's an all-around good guy with lots of time on his hands.
RR: Reed Rahlman (rkr@well.com) has written a number of dark comedies, which, in the best comic traditions, have some combination of blood, con-artists, and two headed babies. He welcomes your comments on his reviews, but don't expect him to answer.
SK: Shel Kimen (shel@thenet-usa.com) is trouble. (And Associate Editor of *The Net*.)
SS: Steve Szyszko is a sysadmin/Webmaster who, not surprisingly, is extremely skeptical of any promises made about the Internet. He shoots a great deal of pool, has no pets, and adores Gored Vidal. Reach him at szyszko@mail.utexas.edu.
TG: Tom Geller (TGeller@aol.com) is a San Francisco-based writer who has used online services since 1986. He has no bodily warts.
WC: *The Net*'s Associate Editor Wayne Cunningham (wcunning@thenet-usa.com) is afflicted with the postmodern condition. He grafts areas of human endeavor together at will, and is happy practicing such modern anomalies as infotainment and imagineering.

Gastronomic Delights on the Net

All this net cruising's probably made you hungry. Luckily, the net is a virtual repository of recipes, enough for a whole meal.

For those of you with appetites, check out some of these goodies. And, for a bit of gastronomical humor, try the Jean-Paul Sartre cookbook at **http://icemcfd.com/ wayne/sartre-cookbook.html.**

MAIN COURSES

Bundy Family Kitchen
http://www.spe.sony.com/Pictures/tv/married/exclusive.html
If you like "Married, with Children," you'll get a kick out of these white trash recipes.

Burren Fish Products
http://iol.ie/resource/produce/burren/burrenfish.html
A page hawking smoked Irish Atlantic salmon.

Caprial's Cafe
http://www.pacificharbor.com/pubmkt/cc/
Find chatty diatribes on various dishes.

CMU's Recipes Folder
http://english-server.hss.cmu.edu/Recipes.html
This Web interface has links to recipes accessible by Gopher; the maintainer has a definite veggie bias.

Goan Cuisine
http://mrlxp2.mrl.uiuc.edu/~menezes/goa/cuisine/intro.html
A resource for exotic cuisine (Goa is in India).

Howie G's Signature Steaks
http://www.visi.com/howiegs/

Plenty of pictures of meat here.

Japanese Cuisine
http://electrazine.com/electrazine/japantour/food.html
Features Japanese recipes by Keiko Shiba, plus a glossary of food terms.

Johhalx's Diner
http://acm.cis.udel.edu/~jhall/food.html
A very strange selection of appetizers and entrees, complete with a virtual restroom.

King's BBQ Home Page
http://www.eastnc.coastalnet.com/business/food/kings/kings.htm
When you say "North Carolina cuisine," it can only mean one thing: BBQ!

Midland Harvest Burgers
http://email.com/Harvest/Harvest1.html
For vegetarians who need to fool themselves into thinking they're eating meat.

P&W Seafood
http://www.pwseafood.com/
Salmon, halibut, crabs, and prawns from Alaska are featured here.

The Burrito Page
http://www.infobahn.com/pages/rito.html
Analyze your personality based on what type of burrito you like.

The Smithfield Farms Home Page
http://www.ip.net/smithfield/
Its claim to fame is that "Queen Victoria always had a Smithfield on hand for State functions."

The Tamilian Cuisine
http://www.cba.uh.edu/~bala/tamilnadu/food.html
It tells you how to make Biriyani.

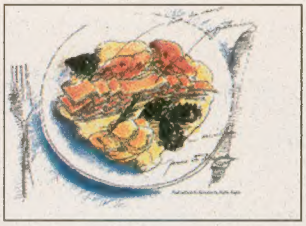
Thundering Herd Buffalo Products
http://www.webscope.com/buffalo/meat.html
Learn why it's healthy to eat buffalo.

Usinger's: America's Finest Sausage
http://www.execpc.com/~usinger/index.html
You can order a "Yard of Sausage" online.

Yet Another Cookbook
http://www.csrd.uiuc.edu/koufaty/yacb/
Actually, a better name would have been "A Venezuelan Cookbook."

GOURMET/SPECIALTY

ArchiWeb: Virtual Gallery — Pasta
http://www.archiweb.com/gallery/pasta/index.html



These professionals will blow you out of the water with their creations. Now, boil that art!

Caviar & Caviar Ltd.
http://virtumall.com/Caviar/home.html
Information on types of caviar, how to serve it, and how to enjoy it.

Cheesenet '95
http://www.efn.org/~kpw/cheesenet95/
All the information about cheese, as in the dairy product, that you might need.

Fancy Foods Gourmet Club
http://www.webwide.com/ffgc/
Find fresh black Perigords for only $400 a pound.

Fromage
http://www.frenchwinesfood.com/guide/fromage/01.html
This site focuses on three types of imported cheese.

GUI's Gourmet Goodies
http://www.telegraphave.com/gui/gourmet.html
If you're living, you need garlic. GUI's got it.

Herbs & Spices
http://www.teleport.com/~ronl/herbs.html
No cyber-chef should be without spices.

Oregon Gourmet Foods
http://www.teleport.com/~ogf/
A plethora of products are available from various Oregon farms.

Pearl's Pantry
http://www.foodstuff.com/pearl/
Learn about making alligator and bison.

The Golden Egg
http://www.ippi.com/golden_egg.html
Truffles, various kinds of meats.

The Gourmet Goldmine... Online
http://www.village.com/ggoldmine/
Biscotti and gift baskets make this a true goldmine for the gourmet net surfer.

Truly Special Gourmet Foods
http://www.netline.net/~kathy/special/special.html
It's French; it must be gourmet.

Welcome to Mycelium
http://www.igc.apc.org/mushroom/welco.html
Who could have figured out that a fungus could be such a delicacy?

DESSERTS

Ben & Jerry's Homemade Inc.
http://www.benjerry.com/
All you wanted to know about Ben, Jerry, and the intersection between ice cream and politics. The flavor lists are fascinating reading.

Chocoholics Divine Desserts
http://www.w2.com/chocoholics.html

Perhaps the only food more divine than chocolate is *gooey, spreadable* chocolate.

Chocolate Pizza
http://www.w2.com/chocolatepizza.html
Chocolate Pizza: All you'll ever want to eat after 6 p.m.

Chris Baden's Jellophile Page
http://sundry.hsc.usc.edu/hazel/www/jello.html
The link titled "Alcoholic Jell-O, an introduction" says it all.

Fairytale Brownies
http://www.brownies.com/
Perhaps the pinnacle of mail-order brownies. A finely crafted Web site, too.

Godiva Online Home Page
http://www.godiva.com/
An online order form satisfies fixes for chocoholic recluses.

Hershey Foods Corporation
http://www.hersheys.com/~hershey/
Milton S. Hershey: the man who destroyed a billion appetites.

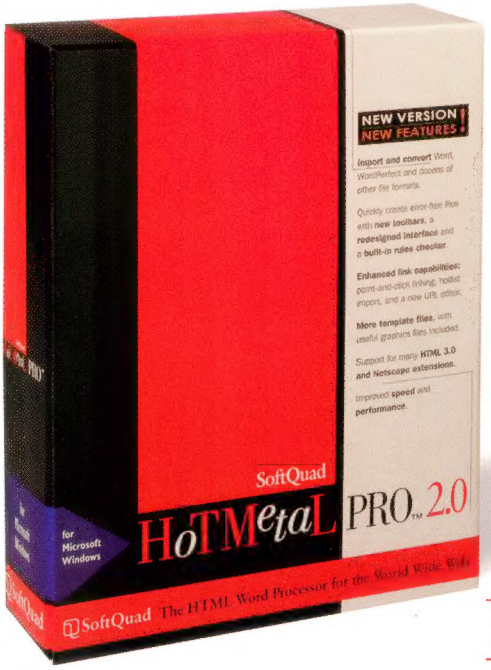
Holey Moses Cheese Cake
http://www.goodies.com/biz/cakemain.htm
From Bailey's Irish Cream to White Russian, the mail-order catalog reads like an atlas.

Kandy Korner Shop
http://cs7bbs.com/pocono/kandyks.html
A one-stop source for sugar-free sweets.

M&M Chocolate
http://www.baking.m-ms.com/
The green ones are... frisky? ■

"HoT Stuff, Indeed!"

—*PC Magazine*
"Editors' Choice" October 10, 1995



Surpasses all other HTML software

"Serious Web publishers will be happy with nothing less than HoTMetaL PRO."

—*PC Magazine*, October 10, 1995

A serious product

"... for creating high-quality HTML pages. With HoTMetaL, it's almost certain you'll get your HTML document correct on the first try."

—*PC Computing*, December 1994

A snap

"A variety of preformatted templates makes it a snap to get standard documents online quickly."

—*PC World*, March 1995

PC MAGAZINE EDITORS' CHOICE October 10, 1995 HoTMetaL PRO 2.0

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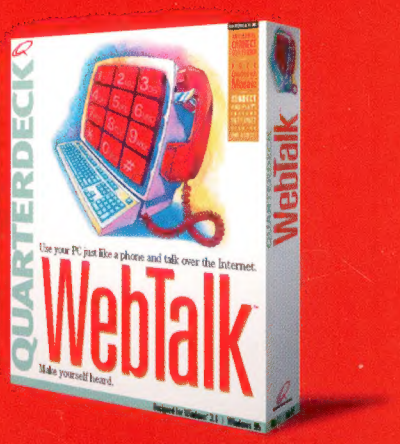

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